

WHAT IS A "HOME"? (THE HOME, 2 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/what-is-a-home-the-home-2-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Hey everyone! Ryan here. You know, a couple of years back, Selena and I were in a tough spot. So we started praying for one another. And what we realized is the more we prayed the more we changed. The more we submitted our hearts to God the more our hearts were transformed by Him. Being able to talk to the living God is such a wonderful gift.

So to help couples experience the power of prayer in their marriage, we've created the 40 Day Prayer Journey. To learn more, go to 40prayers.com. And by God's grace, it will be as transformational for you as it was for us. That said, enjoy this episode.

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Ryan: I just can't get it out of my head this idea that the home is society's forge, that it's where young souls are formed, it's where-

Selena: Disciples are made.

Ryan: Yeah. The very fabric of our society starts in the home. I feel like this work that we're about it's fueled by that thought and that realization. I don't know... especially this conversation around the home, I feel like we talked about what is the home itself. We talked about a lot, you know, on this podcast, discipleship between husband and wife. And on the parenting side, we talk about discipleship from parent to child.

But what of the home space itself? What is the makeup of the home? What is the purpose of the home? Regardless of the structure of your actual physical house, whether it's an apartment, or whether you're in a condo or a house, whatever, what is the space itself? How does it lend itself to discipleship?

Selena: I think the case can be made that our home does reflect the quality of our marriage relationship. And so I guess the question here today is, who are we reflecting in the space of our home and why? Are we reflecting ourselves in our own efforts or are we taking that next step to be intentional and understand how our home can reflect and glorify God? So we'll see you on the other side. *[chuckles]*

[00:01:59] <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.

[00:02:32] <podcast begins>

Ryan: Think of a time when you felt extremely welcome in someone else's home. I know one example that comes to my mind. It's just going to sound like a crazy story. It is a bit of a crazy story. But it's not meant to sound impressive by any means.

We were in Switzerland. The second time we went there... Some people know our story, how we went there. We moved to Switzerland after college to kind of chase a dream that Selena had of being an Au Pair/groom for this amateur horse riding facility. We didn't have anything to lose. So we just sold all our stuff moved overseas. I got really sick, had heart surgery.

When we went back... I know that's a long story. I'm going to-

Selena: Couple of years later, we went back.

Ryan: So we end up going back three years later and we were able to have dinner with my heart surgeon. His name is Dr. Tavakoli. He's this Iranian guy. He's just an amazing heart surgeon. He had studied at the Mayo Clinic, all this stuff. But he welcomed us into his home.

And the irony of it was that I was actually able to share a cigar with him because he's all about cigars apparently. As a heart surgeon it's really kind of

ironic. But just how welcome we felt in their home to have the conversations that they carried on with us, I don't know.

Selena: They shared with us their family and they made a special meal that kind of reflected their culture and kind of their heritage together as a family. So it was really special. Because I don't know that you know a lot of doctors these days that invites patients that they've done surgery on into their home. Like what an anomaly for that.

But again, it wasn't necessarily like the space. The space was a great area to facilitate, but the space was augmented by the interaction and the relationships that they had with one another.

So, listeners, we want to ask you guys some questions to kind of get this conversation started. Before that, why don't we do some housekeeping?

Ryan: Listener, I want to let you know that the fierce families ecosystem, the... I say families, I mean, marriage and parenting, we continue to kind of seek the Lord and evolve, Lord willing. So much of that requires a lot of work behind the scenes.

And that would not be possible without just the morale boost that we get from people who take the time to leave a rating and a review. So thank you. If you haven't done that and you want to I guess talk back at us, we would appreciate that. Leave a rating and review as you feel led.

Also, we have our brother close-knit [00:05:00] patron community. If you go to fiercemarriage.com/partner, you can see what that's all about. But I just want to say thank you I think this time around to all of our patrons who have already jumped on board with us and who have, in some cases, been on board with us for years.

So we would not be here in this place without our patrons locking arms with us behind the scenes, so that we can continue doing the Fierce Marriage Podcast and... we started the parenting one this year, but also all the things that we're building behind the scenes so that we can continue to serve you, our listener, well and other folks on the worldwide interwebs. So thank you so much. That's our housekeeping. Leave a rating and review. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner if you want to join arms with us.

And then the final piece is cospelcenteredmarriage.com. That's our online learning platform for married couples. Go there, check it out and find a plan that works for you there. Did I miss anything?

Selena: I would just add share. Share this podcast. Share it, link it, tag people in. We are on social media, of course. If you see something that somebody needs to hear, tag them, share it. Let's get the word out. You know, God's design for marriage is purposeful, it's full of intention, full of sanctification. And marriage can be really hard unless there's a higher purpose and a bigger goal than just our own happiness.

As we dive into this discussion today, we want to kind of start out with a few questions just to get you thinking. So when people come into our home, listener, if you're thinking, when people come into our home, what do they see? Do they see us living on mission with one another? Do they see... You know, and it's not like you can control their perspective. But you can be aware of that as you're planning and plotting your home and the look and feel. But also just the culture I think should be at the top of that.

So when they come into our home, do people see us working out conflicts in front of each other? How well do we do that? Or do we just stuff it down and get through it and then we'll deal with this later? What are those ways that we resolve conflict? Do they see us caring for one another? Do they see us caring for our home? And how does that priority fall? Are we caring for our things more than our people? So what do you see the purpose of your home?

Ryan: One way I like to think about this is what's the temperature of your home? And I don't just mean obviously the physical temperature, but the warmth that someone feels when they come in. I mean, we could share probably many stories of times we've gone to another family's home.

I'm thinking of some of the times I've been in even different cultures in Central America and in Mexico. You go into these homes, and in terms of material wealth, there's not a lot to show for in their home. There's not a lot of material wealth to be had. But the relational wealth, the hospitality that they show you feels like a warm, welcoming place.

We've even been to some homes that are very wealthy people and the opposite is true. Now, there's not a correlation. If you have a nice home doesn't mean you have a cold home.

Selena: No, we're just trying to make a point.

Ryan: But to make that contrast, it's not about the home itself. It's about the emotional, spiritual temperature, and the hospitality temperature of that home. And that is just one aspect of it. We'll talk about this kind of today and then in coming weeks. But the temperature of the relationships within that home. And you had mentioned, "how do you deal with conflict?"

We were at a family life event last weekend. And one of the speakers there talked about how they had a bunch of people over to watch their kids. They were high school pastors, they had some of the high school or the young adult singles come and watch their kids so they go on a date. Well, on the way to their date they got in this huge fight.

So they actually went on the date, they came back and they had to kind of answer for kind of why didn't you go on your date? What happened? And they had to say, "Well, we had this fight," and ended up kind of resolving that in real-time in the middle of having these singles. Now granted, he was a pastor, they had relationship with these people.

But the point is, even when you're having conflict, there's a certain amount of warmth that comes about by being in a covenantal, Christ-centered, gospel-centered marriage and gospel-centered life.

Selena: And as believers, I would just interrupt and say that we don't have to be ashamed or hide our conflict. We can resolve it with confidence. and even say, "Hey, guys, we're kind of going through a rough time and we've had some..." Just being transparent and owning that I think is good and okay. And even can be an invitation for them to ask for prayer.

So before we dive too quickly into this, we are on this new series about the home. Last week we talked about missional moments and kind of picking apart those moments and identifying them within our day with our spouse. What are we missing? Are we defaulting too much to [00:10:00] other things rather than being intentional about connecting with our spouse? That was kind of the theme there.

This week we're talking about the makeup of the home. And we're going to answer three questions which I will get to in a minute. And then the next couple weeks we'll be talking more about how to bring people into your home and the tool that hospitality is as far as being an evangelist, but also blessing and building up the body of Christ, and then sending each other out and sending... What does that look like? It doesn't have to be just going to work. I think there is more purpose and depth to be had there.

We talked about the moments inside the home last week, like I mentioned, the missional moments. And now we're going to talk about how we can be better stewards of our relationships and time together within the home. So this week, we hope to answer three questions.

The first one: what is the home? The second one: what is the purpose of a home? As believers there should be purpose and there can be purpose there. The third one is: How can God use our home?

Ryan: You had mentioned this word "stewardship." And I just want to make sure that that's clear across the board. It's kind of part of our family's vernacular, if you will. We use that a lot. We're not owners, we're stewards. We don't own anything. God owns everything. And we are just stewards of the things, the people, the moments that He places in our lives.

And so that's what you're saying is how can we be better stewards, excuse me, of our time together in the home? So by 'stewards' we mean kind of this happy relegation of that responsibility, the ultimate responsibility. That God makes the moments. God owns the moments. And we as co-laborers with Christ are called to steward those moments for gospel gain.

Selena: And we will be held accountable for how we spent those moments.

Ryan: That's the sobering side, for sure, is that not a single moment is wasted in God's economy. And my hope is that I would contribute to that and not have to be the thing He has to redeem all the time. But like having been redeemed in real-time.

Selena: So Scripture doesn't necessarily point out oh, you should put this chair here in your house and you should put a mirror here. It doesn't necessarily say, Here's how to set up your home. But it does speak to how we should live with one another, both inside and outside the home.

And we're going to obviously talk specifically right now in this conversation about life inside the home between two people who are married. We see this in the Ten Commandments. There's rules for living, there's rules for relationship, the vertical relationship with God, and also the horizontal with others.

Colossians 3 beginning in verse 18 talks about rules for Christian households. So things that we'll identify as, I think that will set apart the Christian household versus the non-Christian household. So we do see some instruction there.

Also in Ephesians 5, again, we see rules for husbands and wives. And these rules are not to diminish your joy and love for one another. But it's actually there to augment and to thrive, preserve, protect and build up the joy that can be had and shared when we walk out our roles faithfully that God has given to us as husband and as wife. So again, we see... did you want to read?

- Ryan:** No, I'm just ready to read with you.
- Selena:** Yeah, let's read Colossians 3. Why don't you start in 18?
- Ryan:** Okay, well, thanks for *[both laughs]* putting me here on this *[inaudible]*. I'm just going to be the messenger here. It says, "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."
- Selena:** Do you want me to read that? *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** I'm already in. I'm already in.
- Selena:** Already in.
- Ryan:** "... as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.
- Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality."
- Selena:** So we are going to hang our hat here on this group of verses. We're not going to focus on submission today. That's another podcast episode.
- Ryan:** Go back actually. Go back a few episodes.
- Selena:** We talked about roles. Type that one in. That's a good one. But we are going to kind of sit here in this area of he's laying out children obey your parents and everything. Husbands love your wives in such a way that they will see Christ glorified in the way you love your wife. Bondservants are people you know that work with you. I don't know how to translate that essentially to... if you're a worker, work as if unto the Lord and bringing glory to Him in how you carry yourself within the workplace, not by way of eye-service (as people-pleasers) but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord.
- I think that's the key right here for what we're talking about in the home. When people are coming over, *[00:15:00]* your kids when they're watching you, is this just a way of being a people pleaser or eye service? I mean, we

really have to take the time to examine our motives and why do we want to love each other this way and why do we want to love each other in a sacrificial way and not just in a I feel good, you feel good so I guess we love each other. Right? It's not based on feeling.

Ryan: Not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Have you ever been to a Christian home and it's clear... and they would call themselves Christian, and you're over there but it's clear that there's not a sincerity of heart and there's not a healthy fear of the Lord, there's not a humility? And we're not talking about humiliation, but a humility that comes from knowing our place before the living and the everlasting God.

I just find that so interesting. And that's an understatement. But in Colossians 3 it's all about putting on the new self. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. And he goes into a whole list of things we put to death. And then it naturally follows this kind of rules for the Christian household.

So in our hearts, in our guts, something has changed as a result of truly knowing, beholding Christ and being in Him. And that wells up within us, and puts the death in us things that are earthly, things that are sinful. And then it's almost like it's radiating outward now in to the home.

Selena: Well, the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is then being produced in us. You can live out Christian values. But again, the sincerity of heart can go... it can't go unnoticed. And so I'm not saying we're judging each other's hearts in homes. But what we are seeing and what the questions we're asking is, what is the fruit that's been reflected in your home of you and your relationship with your spouse?

Is that one that is reflecting that you pursue the Lord together? Is it one that reflects that I submit to you and you love me sacrificially? Both of those are a call of death to ourselves in how we love one another. And so your home will always reflect what you and your spouse value. They will always reflect it.

Again, are we living our life in such a way that is God-honoring - and people can see that? I know we don't do it perfectly. But those are things that we have agency and then we can strive to live in to better. So our home doesn't have to be just a place where we eat, sleep, do meals, get ready for work, and go. It is not just a place. I think that there's just so much more that we can grab hold of when it comes to living our life in this place called home.

So question number one, what is a home? What is a home? And you came up with this question. And I was a little like, this feels simple. Like, what's a home? And then as you try to answer it, you're like, well-

Ryan: Live, love, laugh, baby. *[chuckles]*

Selena: It's different. It's a different answer for each of us. Because depending on your family of origin home might not be a great place of good fun memories. Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: I would say it should have some element of just the hard and the difficult because that's just life with other people living so closely. But it can lead to conflict if our family of origin is different. I think a lot of our conflicts can come when we have different expectations or there's past pain or frustration there. Which can lead to avoidance and kind of the surface level living.

But if God's doing the work and the Holy Spirit's in there trying to produce fruit, you can't stay that same way. Your marriage will not survive on just the surface level information.

Ryan: Again, there's a lot of nuance to this conversation. Because some, like you said, could have negative home experiences. So when you ask this question, "what is a home?" my first thought is a home is a safe place. It's a place where you go and you can kind of let your hair down, you can relax, you can be yourself in the truest sense of that term.

I think maybe another better way to phrase it would be home is... and coincidentally the word home is in it but homeostasis. Like, where are you at rest. So if you think about an environment that's homeostasis, it means that it is in its resting state. Like where it needs to be kind of in the healthiest spot.

So, the home is going to inevitably be your homeostasis as an individual. So if you grew up with parents that had a lot of anxiety or depression, your homeostasis was probably a lot of anxiety, a lot of depression. [00:20:00]

And so the question we want to ask here is, as Christian married couples, where can we find our homeostasis? And how can that be reflected in the home experience, in the home environment, in the spaces that we occupy, in the spaces we create.

And so this is a call back to the Gospel. It's a call back to what Paul is talking about in all of Colossians chapters 2 and 3. It's what Paul was talking about in Ephesians, that putting on the new self, that you were dead but now you're made alive in Christ. If that true reality is our homeostasis, is where we find our truest identity, then that will inevitably become the homeostasis of our home environment and experience.

Selena: So you said it kind of in the opening for us kind of a home is the place where society is forged.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: I think you had another quote that I really liked. And we can get to that in a minute. But what do you mean by that - society is forged in our home? Like if our home is a safe place, ultimately a God-honoring place, then ideally it would be a place where we can grow and we can sharpen one another, right?

Ryan: Yeah

Selena: ...and be forged. I don't know. Just take a minute and paint that picture for us.

Ryan: Well, I don't know. I contend I guess that in the home, in the interactions that happen in the home, even the private moments in the home, that is where the men and women, the children that make up our society, that's where character is created... That's where character is cultivated rather. That's where truth and ideas are worked out, the big questions of life are worked out.

I think the other phrase we have been thrown around a lot lately is not only is home society is forged... something that we've said many times up to this point. But we said this last week, and it's that the home is an outpost for the soldiers of Christ. So the home is an outpost for the soldiers of Christ.

And so yeah, that's what we mean by that is that ultimately, whatever happens in the home will shake out into society and will begin to forge society. It won't be for 20, 30, 40 years. But think of all the thought leaders of today.

The people in the institutions that are leading our children as they go off to college, those people with those ideas that are taking... internalizing those ideas to a point where they're helping others internalize those ideas mainly through institutions, government, through education, through the institutions of the church, all those people were children at one point. All of those people were told and taught a code at one point to varying degrees of strength. And obviously the code themselves are different. We're all about the Christian home, the Christian vision for the family.

I mean, we're hanging our whole lives on this truth that if we just help other couples live out faithfully biblical truth in the home, that it will shape our society in 30, 40 years time.

Selena: And tangibly speaking, I mean, our marriage has grown in a lot of ways. And especially when we had children, there's just a lot of questions that come around mothering and education and how to parent, which we can talk about in the next episode.

But from a marriage standpoint, I feel like we've practiced this, you know, I might get down, I might be frustrated about some things, but he's really good at seeing the long game. And he's really good at reminding me in those moments that it's not just about this moment, it's not about the frustrations of today but we are forging, which means it's going to take time, it's going to be day in and day out. Which is a bigger encouragement to me than "Hey, good job. I know it sucks. Just keep doing what you're doing." Right?

Ryan: The analogy holds up because a forge is a place where weapons are made and tools are made. And if you think about what's put to work, or I guess the work that is done within a forge, it involves a lot of hammering, a lot of heat-

Selena: Fire. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: A lot of fire.

Selena: A lot of large tools.

Ryan: And so it's in those moments when we are really struggling, I believe that that's when our souls are being forged. The thing is, are we going to the hot fires of Scripture? Are we going to those fires to be refined or are we going elsewhere?

Selena: Because that really does frame out our purpose for the home and what we believe it to be. Which kind of gets into this next question of what is the purpose of the home. We talked about how home can be a place of growth, it reflects our values as a married couple. You said one thing when we were discussing this, that the home is both static and dynamic.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: My take on that was that I feel like static meaning that [00:25:00] there is a high level of predictability, that I know you're going to stay here in this marriage, it helps me feel secure and confident. I'm not concerned about you leaving or going somewhere else. But then the dynamic aspect might be this growth of like spiritual and emotional. Because we have predictability, because we have the static day in and day out, it then provides a foundation and a launching point for us to be able to grow and change.

Ryan: The picture that comes to mind is a mighty oak tree. Those trees are static. They're not going anywhere. But they are also growing constantly. In fact, I was just outside blowing millions of leaves, because we have two mighty oak trees on our property. And boy, do they like to shed their leaves!

But they're static and they're not going anywhere. And they're beautiful. And their strength comes from their being planted. But also, they have to be dynamic in the sense that they're always growing and the leaves are coming and going and the acorns are falling. They're acorns, right? I'm pretty sure they are acorns.

Selena: Yes, they are acorns.

Ryan: But there's an internal growth that's happening. And so I think that's much more true to describe. That's a great analogy for describing the home because it's the tiny microscopic habits, the microscopic moments that truly do determine the strength of our resolve, the strength of our characters.

Selena: And we've talked a lot about that being seen by other people. But I think these are the unseen moments. When a tree is in winter and there's no leaves, growing or anything, there's still growth happening, we just can't see it. And so do we believe that growth is not happening in those moments? Depends on what you value? The scriptures, right? And what truth actually tells us.

Ryan: I just want to say, you know, husband, how do you speak to your wife in those small moments, those in-between moments when maybe you're not having the smoothest past couple of days, past couple of weeks, when you can tell that your wife is sad, or that she is needing you? Husband, in those moments, those invisible moments, are you adding to the growth of your wife as she becomes this mighty oak that she could be? Or are you, instead, killing that growth?

And so because maybe we're not imbibing or taking in the Word of God the way that we should, or internalizing it the way that we should. So I think this is the small moments. Of course, all this translates into parenting as well, which we're talking about marriage here. So I'll leave it at that.

Selena: I guess, again, just to reiterate that our responses to people being in our home, our responses to conflict ultimately reflect that which we have been taking in and that which we have been allowing to occupy our space and our time within us.

And so if scripture is that thing, if prayer is that thing, worship, coming together with the body, then the fruit of the Holy Spirit being at work will be

seen in our responses, be seen in how we live out. I talk about reflection in the home.

Ryan: It really is... we talked about temperature, the thermostat, and the thermometer of the home. The readout on the thermostat it just states fact.

Selena: It does.

Ryan: If your home feels warm from an emotional, spiritual, and literal standpoint, it's because there's a source of heat somewhere.

Selena: It's so telling.

Ryan: If it feels cold, then Christian, that's a call to us to look to our thermostat and say, how am I setting the temperature? Husbands, I'm telling you now specifically, how are you setting the temperature in your home? Are you opening Scriptures with your wife? Are you opening the scriptures by yourself? Are you on your knees ever by yourself where no one can see?

That's where you're setting the thermostat in your home. When we look at the space of home itself, that's why it's so important to look at it soberly and not just looking at the externalities of it, the decor, and the type of house yet. But really, who are you in that space? That is such an indication of who you are truly, and what Christ is doing in you.

Selena: So question number two. I kind of touched on it, but I'm going to bring it back up to the surface here is what is the purpose of a home? What do you and your spouse believe the purpose of your home should be?

For us, when we were looking at the space that we're in now, it was a dream that we'd had many years ago, but our hearts weren't ready for this kind of thing. We weren't ready to have a little bit of property. I don't think we would have steward it for God's glory. It would have definitely been for Ryan and Selena's glory.

And so when this piece of property came up, it's a very rare piece. It's not very big, but we've got a little bit of land in the city and God has been so gracious to us. But we looked at it and there's a shop there and we're like, "Wow, we could-

Ryan: Like a large garage.

Selena: A large garage. We could store our books there because right now some of our books that we ship out, we have to pay for rental storage. And then [00:30:00]

we're thinking, you look around the property, "Wow, home educated here is going to be awesome. We're so excited." And at the time, too, we were meeting—and we still are—we were meeting at people's homes because of pandemic-

Ryan: As the church.

Selena: As the church. And wow, look at this big space that we could have people over. So even in the just looking at this piece-

Ryan: You say big space but it's only... The shop itself is where our church gather.

Selena: Yes. It's not very big.

Ryan: The shop is actually bigger than our house.

Selena: Yes, it is.

Ryan: The living spaces smaller because the shop... but they just had such a massive shop.

Selena: And I tell the story just to kind of... even before we signed papers on any of it, the purpose.. we had already kind of felt this tension of like we're content, we're wrapped, but God is growing and He's doing something here. We're not quite sure what. But again, His perfect timing with the... I want to say spiritual maturity probably of our hearts and our lives. We are in a place by God's grace that we could actually use this place for His glory.

A friend of ours, he always says like, "Blessings are not just for you. They're not just for you. They're always for those around you as well." And so learning to steward that piece of property and to honor God in that has been a journey at least for me, if I'm honest, you know. Because we're kind of used to our own little space and now we have this gift. And so how are we stewarding it well for His glory?

Ryan: And I think the second we start to kind of clench our decrepit fingers around the precious, right?

Selena: Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: That's when we start to turn into a Gollum and we turn into a monster because we stopped giving glory where glory is due. We stopped giving power where power is due. Instead, we take glory and power for ourselves. And that translates itself into really subtle spaces in the home. In the rundown, it says,

"Is the purpose of your home to show off your wealth to others?" That's a hard check.

Selena: I don't know what... No, no.

Ryan: I don't want to say that we have all this wealth and that's what you were addressing. I mean, God's blessed us for sure. But that's not what we're trying to say.

Selena: Ask Ryan and Selena this question 10 years ago, and I don't think we would have had a very good answer. Even 15 years ago, I'll say. I think God's really been gracious. But I don't know that we would say we have a purpose for our home. That kind of sounds silly. Like we live together and we raise kids together and we eat and go to work and to go to church. But what is the purpose of your home?

Ryan: It's almost a bit odd I think how we've begun to view our home as truly like a military outpost of barracks. This is where the soldiers sleep at night. This is where the soldiers eat. This is where we train them-

Selena: If you were the enemy, where would you go to begin deconstructing society? In the home, in marriages, between children and their parents. It's clear that the home is a forge, it is a place where God's army is been raised up.

Ryan: And if you're the enemy... I want to continue that line of questioning. If you're the enemy and you can't get at the husband or the wife, you know, because they've got their integrity intact and they're looking at Scripture, maybe you tried to get out the children or maybe try to get out the space itself.

So instead of getting at them, necessarily individually, instead you just fill the home with so many distractions, material distractions, entertainment, with distractions of desire. I mean, we want this to look nice, not because it's stewardship, not because it's about creating a space for us to be disciplined and disciple others. Now we want this to look nice so we can impress others so that we can siphon off some of that glory for ourselves. And that's, I think, a tac - what's the word?

Selena: Tactic?

Ryan: Tactic, thank you. ...of the enemy to keep us distracted, right? And as much as we love Chip and Joanna Gaines as much as the next person, like a lot of that kind of... that side of decor and all that can become a distraction. It's definitely not bad in itself. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying Chip and Joanna are [inaudible] in their-

- Selena:** She's wonderful.
- Ryan:** Yes. So the point is, is Pinterest and Instagram, all that stuff can be such a distraction from the true purpose of the home.
- Selena:** Agreed. Agreed. I just want to say I think one last thing on this point or maybe a couple of things. *[laughs]* I think there's the kind of this pendulum swing that we have to be careful about. Like you were saying, sometimes we might start caring too much about our home instead of tending to the souls that are within it.
- But then we could also I would argue maybe care too much about the souls and let everything else fall to waste and not again be good stewards in taking care of our home and creating a place that is inviting and hospitable to others. So I definitely think there is a balance. I won't shame anyone if they are more on the let's take care of our kids said than our house because there's truth in that at some level.
- Ryan:** We're not going to be prescriptive, but they're not mutually exclusive. I think what you're saying is that you... and this will go into the next two weeks when we talked about what theme of ministry happens inside these four walls and the ministry because What happens here now will happen out there.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And if our four walls are falling down, so to speak, because we're not caring for what God has placed into our stewardship, then that's a red flag too. Like, people are messy. We're pretty messy. Like, right now our house is in a pretty big mess, because we just got back from the trip.
- Selena:** And it takes me weeks to unpack sometimes. I'll just be honest. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** In general, I feel like when we have order and there's cleanliness, and we're not talking about being sterile in terms of... but that lends itself to the other activities that we're talking about here. So it's definitely consideration, it's not an ultimate means to the end of discipleship and things like that.
- Selena:** Right. So, again, just to reiterate, the purpose that we believe the home to be is that it is a place that can facilitate growth, it is where society is forged here now and of course in the future for God's glory. It's where we rest, it's where we can hang our hat.

But again, it's also the place where Ryan and I work out our issues around communication. It's where we learn to love each other with that 1 Corinthians love of patience, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness. It's the place where the Holy Spirit, I would argue, works the most depending on how much you are in the home.

But it just feels like it's that place that while you're there, you're not interacting with anyone out there, it's just you, your guard can be down, you can rest. And this is where we can quietly meet with our Savior, right? This is the place where we live out those commandments of loving one another, of honoring God, of glorifying Him.

It's not something we do just outside the home, or we do at church, or we do at school or at work or whatever. This is the place that I want to glorify God. This is the place where I want Him to be known. And I want to teach... Deuteronomy talks about this of teaching your kids. And we always do it on Fierce Parenting, maybe we should save it for that. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Yeah, basically, every aspect of the home and every aspect of our lives is really about this end of knowing God and making Him known both to our own hearts, but to others and to our children. Now, it's an all-encompassing.

Selena: And I want to say one last thing about the home because this is the place where I learned how to reconcile. And I think that's important for us to know how to deal with each other, with our children, with others around us. These are the practice grounds. Like this is where it happens.

And you're going to have to learn reconcile and repent because nowhere else in society do you live with someone for so long, and have such an intimate relationship. But I did hear one thing at this conference. They said that conflict leads to intimacy. And I'm not talking just about sexual intimacy. But conflict can lead to intimacy. So if we're constantly avoiding conflict. I think we might be robbing ourselves of some intimate, closer, transparent moments with our spouse.

Ryan: Just think of any relationship where one person has... I'm thinking of a specific, distant family member who another family member said that that person has never said they're sorry if we're a hurt. I mean, we're talking decades. And I can tell you firsthand witness that that relationship between those two people there's no closeness, there's no genuine relationship, there's a genuine friendship. Yeah, there'll be cordial, they'll hang out, they'll even give hugs, but there's no actual relationship.

So if we don't figure this out, and that's what we're seeing right now is in the home is a space where you practice repentance, you practice reconciliation, you will learn how to live the Christian life first one with another, with your spouse. And what a gift!

And in doing so God is so gracious in that He doesn't just say, good, you know, repentance, good. We say, no, I'm going to let that be an avenue by which you become closer as husband and wife, you experience deeper intimacy, deeper levels of even pleasure, emotional pleasure, physical pleasure, that it all arises from this living out. Imagine that - living out the things of God the way He designed, how they might actually lead to our flourishing on every level.

Selena: And I can't remember if it's in 1 Peter or James, but they will know you by how you love one another, like the mark of a Christian life. And I would argue a Christian marriage is how we love one another. And so learning to kind of wrestle with those hard moments, those moments of tension, conflict, frustration, learning to wrestle through those, be committed to reconciling and repenting, and seeking forgiveness will lead definitely to greater joy. It's not easy, but the only way out is through.

Ryan: I want to jump on this real fast. If we see the home as just the place where we go and relax on the weekends or in the evenings, it's just a place where we invite friends over to have dinner and have fun, it's just a place where we store all of our toys between excursions, between adventures, between hobbies, whatever, if we see it as just that, we're missing something huge in this.

A home is a place where, again, souls are formed, where society is forged. And if we recognize that, then we start seeing the other things that are just distractions for what they are - they're distractions from that.

Selena: Right. We really begin to see God's plan and purpose unfolding and things that He values, which consistently contrasts with what the world and our culture values.

Ryan: And so what we'll do then as parents, even as a married couples, we'll say, instead of just going to the easy thing, which honestly it's just a turn on Netflix or somehow watch The Office, that's the easy default thing or to just get through dinner, instead we say, Dinner is a strategic time in our day when we connect as a family, when we connect as a couple. Or the kids are down, that's a strategic time in our day for us to connect on deep levels, not to just veg out. Some of that stuff is good, but I'm just saying that when we see the strategy behind it-

Selena: We understand there are moments to sit and be. And that's okay. And that's good.

Ryan: Thankfully.

Selena: But we would encourage you to not have that be every night and be aware of that.

Ryan: Well, I think if you embrace what we're talking about here, we don't have to tell you that. You would just know it intuitively that this time is valuable for things that are eternal, not just things that are temporal.

Selena: So the first question we asked was, What is a home? The second question we've asked and kind of discussed was what is the purpose of a home? And the third question I think is really... it's the kind of the fun part. It elevates your thinking about... and your creativity.

Actually, I think it should encourage your creativity of how can God use our home? That's the third question. How can God use our home and our relationship I would add? Well, we'll dive into more of this next week. But I want to just kind of talk about have you and your spouse discussed this or thought about this?

Funny story. A couple of years ago, a lot of years ago, actually, we used to live in Southern California. We had a two-bedroom apartment. It was very nice by many standards. I went to young life, and I was a volunteer leader. I went to Young Life camp. And then I was going to be in charge as campaigners, which is a small group for these teenage girls. And a lot of them came from wealthy families, big houses, gated communities, all that kind of stuff. And I lived in this two-bedroom apartment.

And I came home and told Ryan, I was like, "Babe, we got to start looking for a house." And he's like, "What are you talking about?" I said, "We gotta look for a house. I know we may not be here forever and ever but we've got to find a house. I need space for these girls. We got to do Bible study, we got to pray, we got to like seek the Lord together."

Ryan: And we were literally living hand to mouth. I was doing web development and we were getting... I remember getting checks in the mail the day before I had to write checks for rent. *[chuckles]*

Selena: But still we need a house, right? *[chuckles]* This is my mentality in Southern California, one of the most expensive counties in the United States, somehow.

You were so great in reminding me consistently that we don't have to have a perfect home.

I cleaned our apartment as best I could. I made it nice. I made it warm. We made food together. To the girls it was not about where we were meeting. It was about who we were meeting with and the content and the relationship that we were going to experience together in learning and growing in the things of God.

Ryan: And what would you say about the ministry that happened around that square table that we had? Square bistro table.

Selena: Square bistro table. It was bigger and better than I ever could have imagined.

Ryan: I remember, you know, I tried to stay away because there's like 10 teenage girls in my little tiny apartment. I usually went for night runs I think and for trail runs. And I remember coming in and just seeing some of the ministry happening and how... yes, you're absolutely right, I will just attest the ministry that happened in that tiny apartment I think parallels or rivals any ministry we've had in any place we've lived.

Selena: Yeah. There's no replacement for the face to face. And God was so gracious and growing me as a leader and growing me as just a person to say, "Oh, I don't need to have the perfect everything. We don't need to have a big house to have these girls. They just want to come to someplace that they get to go on their own. And we get to learn and pray for each other and know each other and read scriptures together and learn how to read Scripture."

So all that to say God can use anyplace. He can use an apartment, He can use your bedroom, a one-bedroom place. He can use whatever He wants, wherever He wants. Because again, it's not about the place. And that's not to take away again from creating a home. I think there are beautiful joys in that. It is just to say that, like you said, the temperature of our home isn't determined by the size of our home. Right?

Ryan: And it's not about the place, it's about the space. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Ooh, there it is. There it is.

Ryan: You gotta rhymes. You got to say. No, but the space being, you know, the interactions that are happening there, the warmth that we talked about. Just don't get hung up on like you have to have the perfect Pinterest, Instagram house to be able to use it for the glory of God.

And I would even challenge you to take whatever reservation you have in that regard and just throw it in the enemy's face and say, "I'm going to use every ounce, every jot and tittle of my life for them to be wrung out for the glory of God, for this discipleship work that Christ has put our hands to. And just watch how He uses that.

Selena: I'm going to just read a few points because I wrote them and I like how they sound written. So I'm going to read them to you. If you think your home is too small and unusable, we would encourage you to stop looking at the size of your home, but ask the Lord to help you see how you can build the quality of your marriage and the relationships within your home. If you have a larger home and are feeling sticky-fingered and struggle with being hospitable because you like things just right...

Ryan: Hello, Selena. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Hello Selena. ..then open your door and take a risk. Invite your small group, have your church over every week, have a few couples over for dinner, learn to be hospitable because oftentimes our blessing, like a home, is not only a blessing for us but also those around us.

If you already see God using your home for His glory, ask for more wisdom on how to continue being used in new ways or old. Just be a willing vessel. God can and will use whatever home He wants for his glory. It's just better to be on board than..."

Ryan: All of that. He will use it. He will have His glory. And He will have it through even our homes. And so our prayer is that you would embrace that and you would walk alongside one another in that as a married couple and that you would experience the joy that is to be had by being a marriage truly on mission first to disciple one another. And that's I think where we've been focusing today. And next week, we're going to talk about that even more — the ministry that happens within the walls of your home. And then the following week, we'll-

Selena: Bringing people in is next week.

Ryan: And then sending out. And so do join us for that. This topic I think more than any other enlivens Ryan and Selena. That's why we do Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting. So anyway, I think that's it.

Selena: Do you want to leave the couple's conversation challenge?

Ryan: Yeah. What is it? *[chuckles]* Okay, here it is. Couples conversation challenge. *[chuckles]* What do you think about your current home life with your spouse? Ask yourself this: Are there ways you can live more unified and on mission at home? And what might that look like? So discuss that, have a candid conversation around it. And may that bless and honor one another and honor Christ in your marriage.

So let's pray. Father, thank you for the gift of experiencing your hospitality, you welcomed us first and foremost into your house, into your home as adopted sons and daughters of the living God. So Lord, may we take that truth, that existence that we share as son and daughter of you and we may we see that lived out in our physical homes here on earth, God.

That we could love one another well, that we could practice repentance, reconciliation, the actions of love, and being patient and kind toward one another so that we might be built up and we might grow in maturity as followers of you, Jesus. And as a result, may we reach out into our communities and bring others into our home to experience that same grace that you've so generously given to us.

Lord, I pray for the couples who are experiencing a brokenness in their home and amount of discord and an amount of chaos. May you bring peace to that storm. And may you begin to rearrange the peace of that home to better reflect what you might have for that couple. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. Thanks for joining us for this episode. I'm actually happy to say this. I don't know if this video is going to make it out. But we're recording video right now.

Selena: We're trying to record video. So if we sound different...ooh. We try not to.

Ryan: It's a little weird. Very weird. But we're trying to see how this works. And eventually, you will be able to find these videos on YouTube. On the YouTubes.

Selena: On the YouTubes that we joke about.

Ryan: Yeah, we're working hard on that. Anyway, thanks for joining us for this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast. This episode is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: See you again in seven days. So until then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:49:32] <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

- **[00:12:27]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Colossians 3:18-25
 - Ephesians 5

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