

BRINGINGS OTHERS IN (THE HOME, 3 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/bringings-others-in-the-home-3-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So something God has been growing into me is the ability to bring others in and not stress out when they come in. So I want to have people over and I want to invite them in and feed them. But sometimes I think I get lost in trying to make it perfect or I try to minimize the mess. So I don't have to stress. I'm not trying to be rhymey there. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan: This is a weekly lesson we've had to really learn because-

Selena: Yeah, God has been gracious. Yes.

Ryan: ...as we've mentioned on the podcast in recent episodes, our church gathering has been taking place in our space, in our home.

Selena: And it's good.

Ryan: It's wonderful. I love it. But it's also-

Selena: It's a holy [inaudible].

Ryan: ...you and I have had struggled with that-

Selena: Yeah, we've had some struggles

Ryan: ...because of this stress that you feel around people coming in our house and wanting to make it perfect. And we've had to talk through that.

Selena: Oh, yeah. Part of that is my own pride and how I view hospitality, which we're going to talk about a little bit today. And part of it is, you know, it is a holy burden I think to bring people in. And it's good. And God is just growing us in that. So we are excited to discuss how to bring people into your home and not only feed their bellies but feed their souls. So we will see you on the other side.

[00:01:22] <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.

[00:01:55] <podcast begins>

Selena: Video people we see you in the same spot. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Yeah. Well, people are-

Selena: If you're listening to this, we are also trying to record a video and see how it goes.

Ryan: Not trying, Selena.

Selena: Sorry, we are. There's no trying in video.

Ryan: You just do. Or do not, Yoda once said.

Selena: Yes, video is recorded or not.

Ryan: Listeners, we're going to be on YouTube, the YouTube. And the way we're doing that is there's going to be a completely new channel. Actually, we're taking our first marriage channel... You know, I'm **going to** hold that announcement for a little bit later on. Should I say it now?

Selena: It's up to you. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: You are the decision-maker. I'll follow you blindly. Okay. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Okay, we'll say it later. Stay tuned. But look for us on YouTube. It's not **going to** be the same Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting. It's slightly different. I'm excited about what the Lord is doing.

Selena: We'll tell you when the time is right.

Ryan: Yeah, probably next week.

Selena: But we're recording on video and on the podcast. So we'll see how it goes. Anyways.

Ryan: Okay, so if you haven't done it yet, please do take a minute to rate and review this podcast. Thank you so much if you've already done that. Also, our patrons, man, we posted the video in our Patreon community. To find out more about that, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. And within minutes, I was so blown away at the support because we basically just shared over 15 minutes long video talking through some of the stuff that God's been doing in our hearts and our minds and in the ministry that is Fierce Marriage.

Anyway, I was just so thankful for that. So patrons thank you so much for your, uh, your support. It just means so much to us. If you want to be a part of that community, you can go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. You'll see some options there. There's goodies.

Selena: There's goodies. Yes.

Ryan: Books, and maybe even some rings.

Selena: Maybe. Maybe.

Ryan: Maybe even some access to the world's foremost gospel-centered marriage learning ecosystem, Gospelcenteredmarriage.com. Anyway, fiercemarriage.com/partner.

We're in this series and I just want to kind of re-center us on the series that we're in because it does start to feel nebulous, even to us as we're planning. The series is the home. And one of the reasons we did this is because in our own lives, we've been really thinking through the spaces and places that make up the homes of Christian couples.

And one of the implications of that space and that place in someone's life, we've been thinking through that personally. But it's also because of when we're recording this, we're headed right into the holidays. And so it's really helpful for me to calibrate my heart because I'm a bit of-

Selena: Curmudgeon.

Ryan: I love Christmas, but I don't love everything that comes with Christmas. Does that make sense? I love Christmas and my family. But all the extra stuff really stresses me out. And so I have to really think it's not just about Ryan and it's not just about what I want.

Selena: It's about Jesus' birthday. But-

Ryan: Well, is it though? It should be. But is it though? I feel like there's a lot of extra stuff that's been tacked on there.

Selena: Sometimes.

Ryan: So anyway, it's really helpful for my heart to think, Okay, this home of ours is so much more than just a building. It's so much more than just a place where we sleep or we crash out or we keep our toys. It's a place where eternal moments unfold in a way.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: So there's opportunities there, as a couple, as a married couple, for us to be on mission with one another, loving one another in that space, but then also recognizing the purpose of that space in the kingdom of God.

Selena: So just some questions to get you guys thinking out there about this week. So the first episode of this month talks about missional moments. So kind of the spaces in between when you're in transition? How are you making the most of those moments in terms of growing in the things of God and connecting with one another?

Last week, we talked about the makeup of a home, not necessarily the structure of the home, but what are the things that are in your home reflecting? What are the conversations that you're having when other people are over? What are those reflective of? Are we overly concerned with what things look like and less concerned about the souls that are in our home, or vice versa? Kind of the makeup of the home, the pieces.

Today, not next week, but today, we're going to talk about kind of how we can be stewards of the home by bringing people in. So we've kind of focused on the space of the home, the relationships within the home, and now we're going to talk about bringing others into the space.

Ryan: I love it.

Selena: And how we can feed them, you know, not just physically but spiritually. We talked about feeding their souls and feeding their bellies, which usually go hand in hand. Or they should, I guess. So three questions we want to talk about and we want to ask you today.

How is Jesus our sufficiency and model for hospitality? All right? I'm going to go through three questions, and then we'll kind of unpack each one. But how is Christ our sufficiency and model for hospitality? Second, is your home a place that welcomes and invites the unbeliever, the refugee, or the neighbor you don't really know? Third, is your home a regular place of gathering and blessing for the body of Christ? If so, how? If not, how can you as a couple begin establishing that rhythm in your home?

Ryan: Wow. Those are some power-packed questions.

Selena: Power-packed questions, yes. We don't want to just live in a home that invites people over and we're just sitting here in tension within our marriage and just trying to maintain a conflict-free, unrealistic home. You know, we don't fight, we don't leave our clothes on the ground, we don't have messes in our homes. We are perfect. Right? That is absolutely not the case.

So talking about hospitality as well as just being a blessing by sharing what we have, right? It doesn't have to be perfect. I'm speaking to myself. So again, we're hoping to unpack these questions a little bit more.

Ryan: I think you and I, just as a sidebar, we're a bit on the opposite ends of the spectrum. You tend to want things to be very neat and tidy and perfect.

Selena: Not for me necessarily. It is for me in the fact that my head and heart feel better when there's a little bit more order in my own home. I go to anybody's home, there can be chaos, it doesn't bother me one bit. But in my own home, I want there to be some sort of order and a bit of peace so that I feel like we can offer that as a safe place for others. However, that is not always the case when you have young children.

Ryan: So that's your home.

Selena: And that's okay.

Ryan: From my perspective, I want it to be, you know... I don't really care what state of the house is in unless there's some reason to impress this person. *[laughs]*

- Selena:** I don't know those people. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** I don't know. So I tend to be more of the, you know, here I am, take me as I am, my blood is red sort of thing. I don't know. That's the tension that we fight because you'll be getting things cleaned up to bring people into the home. And I'm thinking, "No one's **going to** care that this is the case." And they might. They might not.
- Selena:** I think it's just disarming for people when they can see the mess that's kind of in your space. So I don't want any of my friends to be like, "Oh great. I have to clean my house every time the Fredericks come over." Like that's not at all what I'm saying.
- Ryan:** No, no, no.
- Selena:** I love the - what's the word? The evidence of life being lived. I love the evidence of life being lived. And I do love it in my home only until about 4:30 when it's time to clean up. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Because I forget people come over to our house and we have our dining room table or kitchen table—they're one and the same—is white... what would you call that? Kind of like shabby chic sort of.
- Selena:** Farmhouse shabby chic. It's more shabby less chic. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** And I mean, it has the evidence of life. Kids have colored glue, paint
- Selena:** We bought it from a lady who had refinished it.
- Ryan:** It's like the paint is rubbing off.
- Selena:** For some reason, I got white when we had like a toddler and a newborn. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** It's an awesome table.
- Selena:** It's a great table.
- Ryan:** And like the seat cushions are reupholstery covered and the fabric is tearing. And people come over and we're like, "Hey, welcome to our house." And I just forget this is not a normal thing if you don't have kids. Your tables completely just shows this... I love how you said it. The evidence of life. And I kind of have to remember and then I bring them in and say, "Hey, this is where we live our

lives. And so you're seeing these marks and just know that they're there. And we love the scratches and the paint."

Selena: And I think that's the key is just really inviting people into the shabby, right, into your mess, in your life. I had a really good friend in California who always did that. She would always just invite me over and cook me lunch with her kids—it was before we had kids—and just let me spend the whole morning with her. And we would talk. We were young life leaders together. And it would just minister to my soul on a deep level.

And I think it was very transformative for me when I did step into motherhood that like I don't have to have it all together. And we as a couple don't have to have it all together. We can very much live for God on display in our home with some decorum and with some transparency. I think that is very God-honoring.

So let's look at Christ. Let's go to the scriptures and talk about how He is our sufficiency for what we would call hospitality and how He is also our model in scriptures. It's not about us, right? It is. But it's not. It's not about what we have, but it's very much about us. Or about Him, excuse me.

So Jesus feeding the 5,000 to 7,000, there's a few different accounts that we see here. We see it in Matthew 14:15, Mark. I don't know if they're all different accounts because there's like 4,000, 5,000. I don't know if they did a headcount or just like... *[laughs]* And those were the men usually. I mean, we can just pick one.

In Matthew 15 when He's feeding the 4,000 here, Jesus says, verse 32 "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I'm unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

Ryan: Wow. This is really telling. Because if I remember... it's been a while since I've read these passages, but Jesus goes about feeding this crowd miraculously, right?

Selena: Oh, yeah, because you got the disciples that are like... Jesus is saying, "Here's the need," and the disciples are like, "How are we going to feed all these people?" Which is usually where I stand. I'm like, "I don't know how I'm going to feed all these people."

Ryan: If I remember right, He fed the 5,000, and they said, "How are we **going to** do this?" "Oh, go to this boy. He's got the loaves and the fish." And He has enough

for everyone and the leftovers for the disciples. And all their minds are blown, right?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: And then like the next chapter, they're going about it again and He's like, "Oh, we need to feed these people, have compassion with these people that are now with me." Now, the 4,000. And the disciples were like, "We're **going to** get food."

Selena: They literally says... "And the disciples said to him, 'Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?' And Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven, and a few small fish.'" And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over."

Ryan: I don't want to gloss over that. "And they ate and we're satisfied."

Selena: Jesus is the factor here, though.

Ryan: Can we just pause for a minute and just think through? Thankfully, our Savior is patient and loving and long-suffering. Because He have these disciples that are like, "Listen, we were just there when you did this but for some reason, we think that you probably couldn't do it again."

Selena: Well, and we're looking at the Son of God. We believe that He is who He says He is. But God we've got grocery issues. [*chuckles*] I want to gloss over but-

Ryan: Look at the implications of this real quick for our faith, right? The Messianic person that Christ was. His own disciples, and even Matthew, in this case, who was writing down kind of the accounts of these, they weren't just "Yes, men or like these... what are they called? Like these loud kind of..."

Selena: [inaudible] that you send out?

Ryan: They weren't just mindless people who would just cheer and just say, "Yeah, anything you say and do, yeah." And you think, well, it'd be great because I had they'd have more faith in that case. But these guys were filled with doubt, they were filled with this ignorance, they were filled with the-

Selena: Self-righteousness.

Ryan: ...inability to grasp the truth of who Christ was or who Jesus was. And you don't see this fabricated account of like "And the men had faith because they knew He was the Savior and the Savior did what the Savior does." And then I'm writing the story. And the men were even more faithful because I'm writing it I want them to see more faithful.

No, Matthew is like, Listen, these guys were filled with doubt. And yet, the point is not them. The point is that Christ comes and fills all the gaps and bridges, all those divides between us, between our unbelief and our faith. And then He sends the Holy Spirit to then help us believe.

So the implications of this on us as couples, wondering, God, how are you going to use our meager loaves, our meager fish to feed your people, to feed the hungry among us? Of course, that's literal, but it's also metaphorical. How are you going to use our station, the Fredericks, or you fierce couple to minister into the profound work that God is doing? The point is that Christ is the one who does that work.

Selena: He is the one who multiplies.

Ryan: And we're literally just distributing baskets of His goodness. *[laughs]*

Selena: Yes. Yes.

Ryan: And we ourselves are satisfied in the process. So I love that.

Selena: Again, Christ is our sufficiency for the possible conversations that might feel awkward with people we know or don't know. He is our sufficiency for food, I mean, materialistically thinking.

I was talking to my friend, Mary, and she was talking about this book, "The Gospel Comes With The House Key." And she was talking about how hospitality and feeding people can come with this pressure of everything has to be perfect, we have to have enough food for everybody. She's like, Or it can just be a blessing and be like, "I'm making soup and I've got enough I think, but what I have I'll share with you." Like it doesn't always have to be perfect. It doesn't have to be perfect.

I think she would argue that resting in Christ sufficiency for us can be enough for others, the fact that we're opening our home as a couple I think shows that we're unafraid to share even in kind of the... if we're struggling as a couple, I think, again, bringing others in, not just missionary, but also to come alongside us too I think is one piece that I don't want to gloss over.

Ryan: I love it how Jesus takes time. He's spent these days preaching and basically showing the people. I wish we could see in here, kind of read transcripts, or hear Him speak obviously in those moments that Matthew leaves out. Like the three days when He was ministering to the crowds.

He's spending all that time convincing them of Himself. Like, "I am fulfilling all of these prophecies. I am the Savior. I'm here to do what I came to do." But then He stops and says, "Wait, it's not just about the word that I'm proclaiming here. So there's some actual needs, and he's pauses to meet them in their physiological need. Because He Himself had taken on physiological needs as a human.

And so for us, sometimes we can, especially if you have a ministry-minded household, it can be tempting to only want to meet people's spiritual, emotional, psychological needs. Meaning that, come over, we'll counsel you; call me, I'll give you some advice. And we'll kind of keep you a little bit at arm's length. But there's something to be said by bringing people into the fold of your household and saying like, "Yes, welcome to-

Selena: ...our shabby table with all of our food.

Ryan: "Welcome to the evidence of our lives for better or worse." Again, I like how you said this early. You said there's still some decorum there, I mean, that you want to treat people with dignity while they're in your home. You don't want to have them-

Selena: Manners or a thing.

Ryan: ...you don't have like a massive, really awkward fight. *[laughs]* Like try to have some decorum without lying to yourself or lying to them. But meeting their physiological need, bringing them in, feeding them is a beautiful thing.

Selena: Right.

Selena: Jesus as our model and sufficiency in terms of our home and in terms of the people that we're bringing in, He models this without hesitation. You see Him reaching out to the lepers, to the outcasts, healing the rejected on the Sabbath, and coming to fulfill the Sabbath. And we also see Jesus in Matthew 19—we've got a lot of Matthew in the Scriptures today—Verse 13, Him inviting the children to come to Him.

He says, "Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, 'Let the little

children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.' And he laid his hands on them and went away."

So He is inviting the children, which I feel like when we're being hospitable sometimes, we're like, "Yeah, kids go play, go play," instead of like... And always trying to like work hard to just kind of like, "Go do something else so that the adults can talk."

There's a time and place depending on what the content of your conversation is. But for the most part, we should be including our kids in the conversations at the table, in being hospitable with others, and letting others hear kind of the awkwardness of what it is to be a parent.

I think we kind of buy into the lie that other kids are not like our kids. Like our kids are this that or the other (fill in the blank) and other kids aren't like this. No, every kid just got their quirks and their weird nuances. And we're all just kind of like in this mess trying to parent, and by God's grace create some figure of an adult that can *[laughs]* function for God's glory in society. Right?

Ryan: So what I see here, I do see that piece where Jesus is bringing in the kids. And that's what you're kind of honing in on. I also see a piece where Christ wasn't concerned with the cultural socio-economic strata. Because these kids were like... in terms of the socio-economic levels, they were at the very bottom. They are-

Selena: Most likely, yeah. For sure.

Ryan: They're kids. So they're loud, probably they don't know much, they're not strong, they don't know the law yet, they're not-

Selena: Jesus wasn't-

Ryan: You have the Pharisees, you have the disciples. So the disciples were still like a level below the Pharisees. Then you have the officials. Go ahead.

Selena: Sorry, Jesus wasn't in like a palace. He wasn't at anywhere. He was out in the crowds. So that indicates to us where He was and the people that followed Him.

Ryan: And the value Jesus puts in the people He ministered to is always based on them being made in the image of God. It's not based on their socio-economic status.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Sometimes we bring people into our homes because it's advantageous to us, because they would somehow bring value to our life, because, you know... we can name the reason, right? They could be important people, they could be wealthy, they could be whatever we value. Some of that's okay. It's fine to want to honor someone of status. But I think the point is that they are not more valuable because of that status. So this routes us is what I'm trying to say is it doesn't matter who they are.

I was talking to a friend recently and were talking about how they got invited to some kind of behind closed doors, like big wig meeting with people of insane net worth. Like insane. Not just six, seven figures, but like eight-figure, like nine-figure net worth. And these people they kind of carry themselves with a different kind of air of competence.

And my body just kind of laughing because he's like, "I just don't care about any of that stuff." He's like, "This is why I don't get invited to this stuff because I don't play by those rules." If you're a human being I value you because of who God says you are. I'm not going to just bend the knee because you happen to have more zeros in your bank account. I love that.

So take that attitude now into the home. Who are we bringing in? I guess bringing in as part of it, but how are we treating them once they're in there? And that's an opportunity to-

Selena: That's a good question.

Ryan: And we can talk about that at length. I don't think we need to. I think that all kind of goes without saying. But the part I want to hone in on here is, as husband and wife, how before any of this happens this can become part of our DNA as a couple to say, "Look at our Savior, look at how he has brought us into that fold. Now, how can we be in unity?" And letting our home facilitate that same sort of ministry.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. Which leads us into this second point that we've been talking about of bring others in. There's always been kind of a refugee crisis. I mean, America is a refugee country. I feel like. We're just a hodgepodge of history, different cultures, and they're blending together, they're coming together. I think that can challenge people, especially, kind of our attitudes and motivations of the heart. Are we being close-fisted because maybe we're scared or nervous?

I think there's a quote in this book, "The Gospel Comes with a House Key," by Rosaria Butterfield where she kind of addresses this in a really bold way. So

talking about feeding the people and then there's a global humanitarian crisis. She says, "Is it safe to get involved? Are refugees terrorists? Is it responsible to use the Bible to guide our actions?" These are hard and good questions but one thing is clear, desperate people do desperate things.

Christians are not called to be desperate people even in desperate times. The Psalms bear witness to this. Christians are called to do God's work in desperate times." I'm going to go a little bit further because I think it just really pushes this point home. "It is deadly to ignore biblical teaching about serving the stranger, deadly to the people who desperately need help, and deadly to anyone who claims Christ is King.

Membership in the kingdom of God is intimately linked to the practice of hospitality in this life. Hospitality is the ground zero of the Christian life, biblically speaking. More crucial question for the Bible-believing Christian is this, Is it safe to fail to get involved?

Jesus says, 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'" Again, we see this in Matthew 25:35-36.

So she ends with this question, which was by another source. "Is our lack of care for the refugee or the stranger an innocent lack of opportunity, or is it a form of willful violence? Is it a reasonable act of self-preservation or is it obdurate sin?"

Ryan: Is it what sin?

Selena: Obdurate.

Ryan: I don't know what that word is.

Selena: I don't know what that word is.

Ryan: I'm **going to** say overtly she's smarter than us. *[both laughs]*

Selena: I think so. Yeah. Yeah.

Ryan: How was the beginning of that quote? The part about desperate Christians.

Selena: "Christians are not called to be desperate people even in desperate times."

Ryan: Oh, man. Again, this is so calibrating, Because if we don't live that out, it's very, very telling. If we are living desperately, being desperate for anything other than more of God Himself, it says a world about what we actually believe to be true, what we actually value, what we actually think truth is, who we actually think is running the show.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That's a heart check for me.

Selena: As a couple, I think this is where conflicts can kind of come into our conversation. Maybe one of you cares more about having strangers in and maybe some of you are a little more introverted and are like, "I'm okay with not having people that I don't know very well come into my home." And I think, yes, there's a level of wisdom and discernment that goes along with that. But the question is, what's the bent of your heart? What's the default of, man, we've met this guy twice at church, and he seems kind of lonely, doesn't seem like he has much family. Like are you inviting him over or not?

It's kind of that like let's put our money where our mouth is. If we are believers and call Christ our King, we don't have to live in these desperate times of preserving ourselves. In those desperate times, she said, we are doing the work of Christ., we're doing the work of God without fear.

Ryan: One of the things we talked about in the Fierce Parenting podcast... By the way, if you haven't checked out the Fierce Parenting Podcast, go check it out. I think we have some really interesting conversations over there. You kind of hear us weaving in parenting stuff here. It's hard not to.

One of the things we talked about over there was setting aside a night every week so that your kids could have an open invite to anyone they... One person per kid, like on a Tuesday night. So you have two or three kids, you could potentially have two or three-

Ryan: Extra kid.

Ryan: ...visitors in your home. And having that be like, "Listen..." We talked about our fictitious child, Johnny. Oh, you could say, "Hey, Johnny, whoever you want to invite Tuesday nights, it's a free for all. Just invite any one person." And that's how that kind of brings your kids into that missional work of the home.

So think about what if, as a couple, we did the same thing. What if we said, "Listen, there's going to be people that come across our path. They're going

to be maybe at work, at church, even in the grocery store. And every other Tuesday night will be our night when it's an open..." Use your discernment, use wisdom, but invite people in specifically as the Holy Spirit leads.

And as you're going about your day, be on yellow alert, where you are looking around. You're not just thinking about just yourself, just your own business, just your own stuff you're doing. But instead, you're saying, where is God leading me in this moment right now? If you see somebody on the side of the road, "God am I called to stop and talk to that person?" This is radical stuff.

Selena: It is. It is. We just moved a couple of months ago, like we said, and we are just getting to know more of our neighbors. They're super friendly. Some of them I don't know super well, but I'm getting to know them. Baking Cookies and bringing goods over to them opens any door I found.

So we've been trying to kind of pave the path to open our door to invite people over. You know, everybody feels different about being in people's houses, especially now with pandemic and things happening in our world today. But I think overall we can always take food to someone and we can always kind of stand on their own or step and introduce ourselves and chat for a little bit. And when the weather's nice, I mean, eat outside. There's lots of... We miss that here in the Northwest. It is literally pouring down rain right now. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: There has to be the relationship there though. Because I've swung far in the other direction, where I've just met somebody and I'm like, "Hey, come on over for dinner," and they're like, "Whoa, buddy, I don't even know you. I don't want to go into your..."

Selena: I think you can start at a level. That's what I'm saying. You can start at a level of like, "Hey..." Like you can bring them some ca... not candy, bring them some cookies, right? Or you can say... Our friends, Jess and Jake, were really good at this.

Ryan: They were.

Selena: They would always say, "Hey-

Ryan: They still are.

Selena: Yes. They're always good about inviting somebody over. But even I think inviting people to a group of people can be more helpful to instead of just one family to one family. But "Hey, we're having a few families over this night.

We'd love you guys came by. You can even stop by." Just making it really easy and short and functional for everyone.

Because I guarantee once people kind of get in the door, their guards typically will go down. Once they start having conversations with each other... Again, we start seeing the image of God within those people, we start valuing them, they start valuing us. There's a lot to be had in terms of having honest conversations and struggles with each other and being okay to endure the awkward and walk through it. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: This is why I love the Great Commission. If you view it as Jesus has thrown this rock into the river of eternity and that rock of the Gospel, the work that He completed on the cross radiates outward. And as that same rock is making waves in our own hearts, those affections radiate outward. And the great commission is first and foremost fulfilled by us discipling those closest to us. One another in marriage, hey, fierce marriage, there you go, our children, oh, Fierce Parenting, look at that.

And we're talking about how does it radiate even literally outward from your house into the lives of your physical neighbors. I think so often with social media stuff, we have this weird, convoluted sense of relationship. We think that because we have a thousand friends on Facebook, we actually have a thousand friends.

If you talk to somebody, no one's **going to** say, "I have a thousand close friends. *[Selena chuckles]* No one's going to say that. And no one would say that overtly. But we believe that in our hearts. And we start to have this superficial sense of oh, we're friends, but I don't actually share meals with you, we don't talk about anything other than the weather and traffic and stuff that's bugging us about work. And I don't even know the names of your kids. That's not a friendship. That's something but it's not a friend.

Selena: Just an acquaintance.

Ryan: Acquaintance. So what I love about what you're saying, Selena, is that if we focus in on our actual neighbors or our actual neighbors-

Selena: Geographic neighbors.

Ryan: ...there's only a few of those people. And you're only going to connect with a few of them anyway because that's just how life is. You can't connect with everyone all the time. So you find those few families that you have some affinity with, that you have some things in common, maybe you just hit it off or maybe there's a special need there that you can help meet. And you just

pray for the Lord to give you opportunities to bring those people in. You don't need to invite the guy from across the street... or across town rather. Across the street, yes, you do.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: But from across town, I mean, or every single... We have a lot of homeless people in our area and I always struggle with... You know, they're asking for food and money, and I have food and money, I should give some of my food and money to them. And I've talked to friends who run the food banks and stuff. They said, "No, don't give them any money." They said, "That's not how you can love them well. You can give them food." But usually, they have more than the food anyway. What they need is help. And I'm realizing that there are ministries that focus on that.

And so you having to find like what is God calling me to do deep ministry? And it's not just throwing \$2 at somebody, or-

Selena: I heard a friend of mine. She said that she wanted to go to all the thrift stores and buy up the cheap Bibles that people just donate and put like \$2 in them and then hand them to a homeless person and say, "There's a little bit of money in here, but you have to find it and like make them read through it."

Ryan: Just turn it over and just flip the pages.

Selena: I know. But I just thought it was kind of a creative way to hopefully share the gospel.

Ryan: Or say there's money in there. Say, "There's two \$100 bills in there, you have to find them." Give them the Bible and then there's no money in there. *[laughs]*

Selena: How terrible is that? Okay.

Ryan: Kind of shoot your message in foot in [inaudible]. *[laughs]*

Selena: It really does. It really does. I'm glad you thought that through. Let's just revisit this question. Is our home a place that welcomes and invites the unbeliever, the refugee, the outcast, or the neighbor that you don't really know that well. Because I think it can be a struggle for us especially as a couple if somebody is more the inviter and the other ones not, or one somebody feels more conviction about being okay with, I don't know, strangers, and the other one is not. *[laughs]*

Or maybe you both feel really excited to have people in your house that you don't always know. And maybe you're just coming on too strong. I don't know. There can be good conversations to be had about making our home a place that is welcoming, even in the midst of our own struggles. Because you're not going to get your marriage perfect and then be like, "Okay, now we can have people over."

Ryan: That's true.

Selena: I mean, we're **going to** have conflict no matter who comes over. So how are we able to kind of live transparently into that?

Ryan: So I'm **going to** take a little bit of a detour here. I'm sorry. But what we're talking about here is not just rudimentary believer stuff. What I mean by that is, like, I have the sense. Okay, so we work a lot with couples, obviously and pornography is something that continues to be a problem. But you get the sense that the husband or the wife, or the couple that's constantly dealing with things like habitual sin, pornography, habitual-

Selena: Addiction..

Ryan: ...addiction or even-

Selena: Alcohol or drugs.

Ryan: ...toxic behavior within their own marriage, manipulation, communication, brokenness, emotional immaturity, couples that are dealing constantly with that kind of stuff tragically never get to this level of ministering alongside one another.

And I think what I feel the Lord saying to us is like, listen, the battle is raging. People are swinging their swords, arrows are being shot. We see that in Ephesians 6. You know, we do not fight against flesh and blood, we put on the full armor of God. Battle is raging. So often we don't even like... we're in the battlefield, and we are digging in the dirt or picking our nose and doing these kind of-

Selena: Going through the motions.

Ryan: It's like the Christian is a believer who hasn't yet been weaned off of milk into actual substance and meat yet. And so what I'm talking about here, if you're struggling in your marriage, just know that that struggle isn't... what I'm trying to say?

Selena: Isn't without purpose. I've heard the same too that conflict can lead to intimacy. And so I don't think we can be afraid of conflict, but with conflict, there has to be repentance. And if there's unrepentant sin, it is going to be, I think, more difficult, and it's not going to be an easy or joyful, or it's **going to** be way more of a burden to like bring people in. You're **going to** feel much more of uh, we have to do this, we should do this. We're not being good Christians if we don't do this. Or some kind of voice like that.

So again, it's an attitude of the heart. How are we being repentant to one another as we're dealing with conflict? And how are we allowing conflict to draw us closer to each other, closer to God, and also drawing others in? Because I think through our conflict or through things that we've suffered through, we can share, and hopefully, be that light or also just be someone that comes around them and prays for them and ministers to them and feeds them. Because we know the lack that's there because of our own conflict maybe that we've dealt with.

Ryan: That's where I do want to make that clear. That we're not just saying, "Hey, you're Christian, right? So you need to do these things. Otherwise, you're not that."

Selena: It's good.

Ryan: That's not what we're trying to say. What we are trying to say is we're trying to invite you into the wonder that it is to truly be a herald of this message of the gospel. Like think about the profound nature of what Christ has done in the Gospel. That is the message. It's the message of all messages.

And you, believer, have been brought into the fold of God. And that reality is changing you. It changes the whole DNA of your relationship and household. And then we're saying, bring people in. And that's just a wonderful thing to do. It's a natural outpouring of it.

Selena: I also think that bringing others in, and this is going to lead us to our third point, especially bringing others. So this third point is bringing in the body of Christ and blessing the body of Christ. Is our home a regular place of gathering and blessing for the body of Christ? And if so, how? And if not, how can you or we as a couple begin establishing that rhythm in our home.

And I think the benefit to us if we're in conflict, we're trying to repent... trying... we're repenting, and there's kind of a struggle that just keeps nagging at us and maybe there's some deep, deep hurts and issues. The beauty about bringing in the body of Christ is that they will bless you as much as you're

blessing them. Maybe you bless them with a meal, but they're blessing your soul with ministry when they come over.

And so this is specifically talking about believers and about how we can minister and be ministered to in those situations. So is it a regular rhythm to have people over that are in the body of Christ, that are pastors, maybe that are leaders, people that are on the front lines?

Your parents came over for dinner the other night and they were telling some stories. They were feeling nostalgic or something. They just kept going on and on.

Ryan: They do not stop telling stories. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: It's not usually like them. They usually... I don't know. They were just feeling... I don't know. They were just reminiscing.

Ryan: Literally rapid fire.

Selena: And Ryan was just sitting there like... but it was sweet.

Ryan: Some of them I've heard. Some of them I hadn't heard. I was trying to be engaged. I had some other things I was kind of distracted by that evening.

Selena: It was really sweet. They brought up this thing called... that they used to do. So his dad was in seminary, and then his mom worked but they did... It was called pulpit supply. And I totally thought, I was like, "Oh, yeah, they supply pulpits and things that go on the pulpit." I was joking because I knew that's not what it was. It was like facetious joke.

Ryan: They were like the blockbuster of pulpits that you would rent.

Selena: Yes. What was it?

Ryan: So a small rural church is where my parents-

Selena: South Dakota, sorry, guys.

Ryan: They were in South Dakota at a seminary, a very rural farm town. So you get these churches with like, you know, 5, 10, 15 people in the church and they don't have the ability to... they don't have a pastor. Somebody hasn't been raised up, or doesn't feel called to lead that church. I guess it was organization that was called Pulpit Supply and they would take these budding seminary students who had signed up-

- Selena:** It's just feel so dangerous to me. *[laughs]* But I get it. It's one time.
- Ryan:** They line up doctrinally. So my dad was Baptist. He basically stay on like the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran kind of the isle. *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** So they would send him and they'd give him 50 bucks. If they liked him, they'd ask him to come back the next week. And it was a quick way for my parents to kind of do ministry, to get a little money,-
- Selena:** Get their feet wet with it.
- Ryan:** ... a little from a seminary.
- Selena:** One of the things that they said they always did was that they would always get invited to dinner at someone's home or someone would take them out. I think the funny story, I don't know that we have time for it. But somehow they ended up with at a person's house that had a bowl in their kitchen because it was so cold. Their barn had blown over and they needed this. This was their prize bowl that they used to-
- Ryan:** To breed.
- Selena:** ...to breed. His parents were like, "Okay, like, this is crazy and awesome."
- Ryan:** They're fixing food in the kitchen. There's a bowl, a whole grown bowl like laying down, tied to the plumbing.
- Selena:** With the chain in its nose with the ring. Because they were supposed to go out to dinner-
- Ryan:** And they couldn't because the restaurant was closed.
- Selena:** It closed.
- Ryan:** Anyway, they ended up having dinner, then my dad ended up helping with the barn raising.
- Selena:** Which he thought was so awesome.
- Ryan:** What a story! What a story! This farm community in one day, all these men come together and build the barn.

- Selena:** Because they can only take one day off from their own farms.
- Ryan:** That's what you're talking about here though is loving others in the body of Christ, bringing them into your very life. Your home is part of that. But bringing them into your very life and how your home is... In many ways, it's ground zero.
- Selena:** Yeah, it's embracing the awkward and learning how to live out Christ's call for us. And so for us as the Fredericks, we do want to bless the pastors in our area that we know. In our homeschool community, we have a couple of pastors and we try to be intentional about having them over for dinner and blessing them as a family. Church and small group, we try to host those a couple of times a month or once a month. I think one rotation and then of course, yes, we have Sunday mornings here at church, which praise God for that, right? But if you-
- Ryan:** Real quick. I'm hosting men's group tonight and I sent out a text to everyone. I said, "MEN, YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED," All caps "TO COME OVER FOR A GROUP TONIGHT AT OUR HOUSE, FEATURING FRESH TEA AND STRUMPETS COURTESY OF YOUR MOM." In all caps. Sometimes these guys give **going to** be lumps on logs. I'm trying to get them to show up in the text thread.
- Selena:** He's really funny. I think he's funny.
- Ryan:** Anyway, tea and strumpets.
- Selena:** So have regular meetings, have regular meals for you to specifically be blessing the body of Christ in some way. So quick recap. Christ is our sufficiency we have nothing to fear. He is our sufficiency spiritually and tangibly and literally.
- As believers, we can no longer sit on the sidelines. The home is the front lines like you said where the gospel is presented and forged into society, it's not just a meal, it's a moment. So is our home a place that welcomes and invites the stranger? And is our home a regular place of gathering for the body?
- Ryan:** I love it. I love it. Fierce listener, make your home blessed. I love the benediction in case like this. May the Lord bless you and keep you, make his face to shine upon you and give you peace and those who enter your home.
- And May those realities play themselves out in between the walls of your home and may that true reality of the Lord blessing and keeping you play itself out in the hearts of you as a husband and wife. And may your home be blessed, particularly now, I'm [inaudible] this episode, but as we head into the holidays,

remember the ministry that you are about. And that it's not just about you. Your marriage is not just about you.

The Fierce Marriage podcast is not just about making your marriage great. It's about seeing the message of the gospel worked out in your life and the lives of couples all around the world. And by God's grace, it will be done and He will have His glory. I love it.

Selena: Couples conversation challenge. It's always a tongue twister there. Discuss these three questions or these three areas and pick one to work on, I think over the next month. Maybe you have small group at your house every week. So maybe think about how you can incorporate the stranger into that.

Ryan: I love it.

Selena: Why don't you pray us out? And yeah.

Ryan: Lord, thank You for Your goodness for modeling hospitality, for feeding the thousands and for feeding us, for being our bread of life, our water of life that you have so generously given yourself to us that we might live, that we might know you.

Lord, I pray that we would behold the true depth of what it means to be fed by you, to be brought into your household as a son of God. And I pray that that reality would then help us and compel us to be on mission together as a couple, as we bring others into our home, as we minister to one another even in our marriage within our home.

And Lord, may your eternal reality be our present truth and may it drive us, may it govern us, and may we love others the way you have loved us in Jesus name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. As a quick reminder, our online learning platform is just getting started. We are filming this right now—listener you can't see it because obviously, you're just listening— *[Selena chuckles]* because we are gearing up to keep content going for the Fierce Marriage Podcast, the Fierce Parenting podcast. That will be online in short order. But also the online learning classes which we do mini learning courses within Gospel Centered Marriage. It's our online learning platform.

So you want to get in there because I think it's going to be worth your while. Go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com and find a plan that works there. And I'm confident that it will bless you and it will bless those around you indefinitely.

So 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.

[00:47:48] <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

- **[00:12:24]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 14:32

- **[00:20:05]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 19:13
 - Matthew 25:35-36

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