

THE MYTH OF THE SOULMATE

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[00:00:00]

Selena: Is it possible that I maybe did not marry my soulmate?

Ryan: Well, that's a good question. *[both laughs]* You put me on the spot here. Actually, I would say, on this end of it, no, it's not possible. But I think it... Yeah, well, this is... *[both laughs]* Goodness!

Selena: It tricks you.

Ryan: It did tricks me. So are soulmates a real thing, biblically speaking? As Christians, and as people, even if you don't call yourself a Christian, is there such a thing as a soulmate, that one person that you were meant to be with for your life? As it turns out, this idea of a soulmate comes from, as you did some research, pretty far back-

Selena: Pretty far back. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: ...in terms of historical thinking and philosophies and even some religious ideas. And so we're going to unpack kind of what we're calling, maybe it's a giveaway, but the myth of the soulmate. So thanks for joining us. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:02] <music>

Ryan: You kind of got me there.

Selena: Sorry.

Ryan: I was like, "I sure hope. I sure hope." I don't know. Because you want to think that... I think-

Selena: It's kind of a trick question.

Ryan: It's a trick question. *[both laughs]* Thank you. I'm [unintelligible 00:01:23] right now. So here's the thing. I think Selena, because I know you, because I know the type of person you are, I think you could have probably married a number of guys and ended up-

Selena: Never.

Ryan: ...happy with them. They would have been very happy with you. Very happy with you.

Selena: A number of different guys. Not all at one time. That's not being funny.

Ryan: Yeah, not all at one time. *[Selena chuckles]* And I feel like you probably would have had, ideally, by God's grace, a healthy marriage. But that's not our reality. Is it?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: We're married to one another, therefore, yes, I have a soulmate. Her name is Selena. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: That's it.

Ryan: And we talked about this, not on YouTube, but in the podcast in the past, this idea of your standard of beauty or your standard of attraction, and how when you get married your spouse now becomes your standard of attraction. And that I happen to like five foot four half Hawaiian girls. *[both chuckles]* Not girls.

Selena: A half Hawaiian. Singular. Singular.

Ryan: I happen to like a brown hair, brown-eyed, seafaring *[both laughs]* maiden. Anyway. So, we're going to unpack this idea of a soulmate. I think if, whether consciously or subconsciously we've taken in this idea, it can actually be really, really harmful on our marriage because it pigeonholes us and it makes us think about love in terms that are not love-

Selena: Not biblical.

Ryan: And not biblical. Before we do that, if you haven't yet, please do subscribe and follow this channel on YouTube, smash that subscribe button. If you're listening on the podcast, go ahead and subscribe to the podcast. And also while you're at it, leave a rating and review. That would help us a ton. All right, so where are we going today?

Selena: So today we're going to talk about this myth that you mentioned, kind of the myth of a soulmate. Define what it is, kind of put some pegs that we can say, Okay, this is how we would define it, this is what it might look like, here are the dangers of it within our marriage.

There's pieces I think of that philosophy or that idea that can kind of creep in. And so how do we again, identify just the faulty premise that it is, and then the pieces that

might go with that? And then taking it one step further and saying, Okay, what is the gospel truth in this? What is God's design? Two becoming one. That is the idea of the mingling of souls of true soulmate hood, I guess, to say-

Ryan: Yeah, that one-flesh unity.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Consummation of that covenantal union.

Selena: Yes. I think it's bigger than we think. And so this idea that if I'm a single person and I have to find my soulmate, or if I am married and we're having lots of problems, and I get this nervous feeling inside that maybe I didn't marry my soulmate and maybe I should just back up and get back on that ship that we talked about, that we told you to burn last week, that can be very harmful.

And so we want to identify, why is it not... Maybe there is a little bit of truth in it. But what's the truth? What's the falseness of it? And how can we begin living out of the truth that we know God has given us in His Word?

Ryan: So you can talk about the ancient but kind of origins of this idea?

Selena: I mean, just briefly. I love getting into like ancient history and understanding-

Ryan: You're so smart

Selena: ...ancient civilizations and humanity.

Ryan: She's so smart.

Selena: I always loved history.

Ryan: I want to share a quick personal anecdote because we got married young. We were still in college. And we were somewhere and you saw the cousin of one of our friends.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: And you said something that was so devastating to me *[laughing]* as a young husband.

Selena: Oh, no. What did I say? [00:05:00]

- Ryan:** And you did not mean it in a devastating way. I think you were just being kind of flippant I'll say in an innocent way. You weren't trying to be hurtful.
- Selena:** Oh, dear!
- Ryan:** But you said you thought this-
- Selena:** Oh, *[both laughs]* I remember now. Okay.
- Ryan:** Do you want to say it?
- Selena:** I don't want to live like that. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** You thought that this person, this young man was very handsome.
- Selena:** I said at the time.
- Ryan:** Basically you said, "Wow, he's attractive." You're talking to me. I forget what you said. Like he's hot or he's fly or whatever you said. Whatever Selena said.
- Selena:** I don't know.
- Ryan:** And then you said, "If I weren't married to you, whoo boy." You said something like that.
- Selena:** Oh, man. And then you got mad, and I was like, "What?" *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And I was just like, "In what universe-
- Selena:** Is this is okay to say.
- Ryan:** ...is this okay to say?"
- Selena:** Oh, now you *[inaudible 00:05:47]* Selena.
- Ryan:** And I got very insecure, very defensive, very hurt. I probably lashed out in some unhealthy way and said-
- Selena:** Oh, it's okay.
- Ryan:** It's okay. I survived. I made it this far.
- Selena:** It was like 14 years ago.

- Ryan:** And now it's coming back. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** It's coming back.
- Ryan:** And I remember you being kind of exactly that. You were like, "Wait, what? I was just making a flippin' kind of... almost a joke, an observation." And I kind of had to come around to the idea that no, you didn't actually-
- Selena:** I don't even know the person.
- Ryan:** But here's the thing, okay? We... not we because we don't do this by God's grace. But many, many couples think on their own. They think if I weren't married to this man or this woman, imagine how happy I would be?
- Selena:** Or imagine what if I was married to so and so?
- Ryan:** Because that person oh, man, we always laugh together, he's so funny, he's so charming. Or she's so whatever. She must be my soulmate.
- Selena:** Yeah. Or maybe someone like her or something.
- Ryan:** "And so I've missed it. I'm already married. I'm married to you."
- Selena:** Oh, no. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** I could be don't be married to this very perfect person. That's how this idea kind of-
- Selena:** It can be dangerous.
- Ryan:** ... is smuggled into our marriage when we start thinking and having discontentment. And if you go back a few episodes, we talked about kind of the one thing that destroys a marriage, the great marriage killer. And that thing was entitlement rooted in pride.
- Selena:** Right? So the pride. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And now that is even informing what we're talking about today is "You're not what I deserve. There is somebody better out there who I deserve." And we're going to demystify this myth of a soulmate or at least, I guess-
- Selena:** We're going to pick it apart. We're going to pick it apart.

- Ryan:** ...find our footing once again in biblical truth and then think about it. So yeah. I am recovered from that since. Period. I never want to talk about it again. We're not going to process that later tonight. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Yes, I think, like you said, there's pieces of us that just subscribe to this idea that there's a perfect person out there for us that's going to make us happy all the time. I mean, Plato quoted Aristophanes. I don't know if that's Aristophanes. It's not Aristotle.
- Ryan:** I think Aristophanes, maybe.
- Selena:** There it is.
- Ryan:** I don't know. Those ancient-
- Selena:** Those ancient Greeks. *[laughs]* But sometimes we think that we've missed the boat again, right? We think that if I didn't marry, like you said, if I didn't marry you, I would probably be so much happier with this person. Well, first of all, that's not who you're married to. So the foundation of this idea of a soulmate, there's so much pressure before and in and after of it, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** This undue pressure to (a) try to find that person. I mean, goodness. It's an impossible task, a seemingly impossible task. And then if you do think that you found each other, how do you know that in your marriage? If you decide to get married, and you're like, "Oh, they're my soulmate?" But what about when problems start happening? Because we're going to have conflict, we're going to not be perfect. Happiness is going to start not being as fresh and not as easy to find, I think. So what do we do in that?
- Ryan:** What I hear you saying is there's an implication. By virtue of being someone's soulmate, that means that there's never going to be conflict.
- Selena:** Well, there's an expectation of, yes, you're there to make me happy, that we're going to be so happy together. That, you know, conflict will get through anything, but we probably won't have much of it because it'll be non-existent because you're my soulmate, right? There's just this deductive kind of reasoning that is illogical on many fronts.
- Ryan:** I want to make a quick observation just on the concept of soulmate. And I kind of heard you saying this a little bit. But I'm thinking about modern, I guess, spouse hunting. Okay, we'll call it that. *[both chuckles]* You're looking for somebody to be with, right? We happen to be in high school dating, college,

got married in college. Well, that's right around the age when a lot of people are on the hunt, so to speak. They're looking for somebody that they can kind of glom on to in a really positive way.

In modern culture—and by modern I mean [00:10:00] over the last 50 years. It started with the sexual revolution in the 50s and 60s—we have completely extricated or separated the soul from the body. Look at all the gender identity issues going on in our world today, right? Your body is no longer indicative of who you are on a soul or on an emotional level. I'm not saying that's true.

Selena: Yeah, I know.

Ryan: I'm saying that culturally that's the narrative. And so when you say soulmate, it's so interesting to me that you have people that are struggling and groping to find their soulmate. But those same people are the ones that are so quick to give their body away as if it's a commodity.

Selena: Detached, yeah.

Ryan: It's completely detached from... In other words, I can be sexually intimate with somebody without actually giving my soul to them is what the world would say. Biblically speaking, there's no such thing.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We are integrated people. We have a body and a soul. We have a heart and a mind. Like we are multifaceted. In a sense, it's all connected, right? And so when I give myself to a soulmate I am giving every ounce of myself to... I'm using "soulmate" in worldly ways.

Selena: Quote fingers.

Ryan: Quote fingers. And so I wonder if that's why this is such a struggle for people because while they're swiping left and right on the various apps and things and hooking up with people, and they're struggling so badly to find somebody they can actually settle down and live with because they have completely separated the physicality of their lives with the emotional reality of their lives.

Selena: Right. And that separation, I think, leads us to the little bit of truth that is in here. Well, the falseness of that idea of being separate leads us into this truth that we are multifaceted, like you said. We are made in God's image. We have Imago Dei. If we look at God, He's a relational God, right? He's a covenantal God's. He desires relationship with us, intimate relationship with us, communion with us. First of all, for Him to desire that is-

Ryan: It's a miracle.

Selena: ...miraculous and gracious and merciful. But for us to also have those same desires just follows suit. Because we're made in His image, why wouldn't we have those same desires of wanting to have an intimate relationship with somebody? And so I think the small truth in a soulmate is that we do want someone that we can feel safe with. We want someone that we can grow old together and have inside jokes with. And for me as a Christian, like I wanted a man who loved the Lord with all his heart, soul, and mind. That was number one on my list. Yes, I had a list and most people do. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan: I did not have a list.

Selena: A mental list probably. I had an actual list.

Ryan: I had a list. It was Selena. That was the list.

Selena: Aw. *[Ryan laughs]* So sweet.

Ryan: One day I'll share my love at first sight story. *[laughs]*

Selena: So the truth of the matter is, is that we are relational beings no matter how - what is the word? No matter how... When you're just like, internal-

Ryan: Independent?

Selena: No. People that don't like to be around other people. Introvert. There it is. No matter how deep of an introvert you might be, you still desire some level of relationship with someone, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Because there's this God piece of us, this design that we made it in the image of God. But the falseness of it, the falseness I think comes when we're talking about this idea that your soulmate is an upfront thing. It's not a qualifier, I think. Does that make sense? Like I'm not going to find that one perfect person. Actually, God has brought me this imperfect person, and His plan is better for me because of the imperfections.

And the qualifier is not that you are my match. And it's not you making me hole either. I am not an incomplete person if I don't find my soulmate. My identity is first of all in Christ, right? And so the falseness of this idea that a soulmate is my other half, they complete me is not biblical.

And so, again, you're starting to see the problems with the falseness of this idea. We want relationship, but we put all the pressure on it having to be perfect and we put all the pressure on the person or the relationship to be problem-free or to be mostly happy and not harmful.

Ryan: I wonder if maybe one way to paint this contrast succinctly would be to say instead of looking for a soulmate, we need to be searching for mates for our souls. That's a very different orientation, right?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: Because now I'm realizing that I am a soul, you are a soul, we are going to join together. And we can be by virtue of just doing the joining you are now my mate, right? Therefore you are my soul mate, my soul's mate.

Selena: There's a quote I want to use right here. We really like Got Questions. So if you're a Christian believer, anybody, actually anybody, [00:15:00] just go check it out. You can type in any question you want, and it gives amazing biblical answer.

Ryan: Any question.

Selena: Any question. I said "soulmate", "is there such thing as soulmate?" comes up. They said, "If you're married the person you're married to is your soulmate."

Ryan: Boom. That's it.

Selena: "Mark 10:7-9 declares, 'A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.' A husband and wife are 'united,'..." This is should not separate Bible verse. This is in Got Questions. "A husband and wife are 'united,' 'one flesh,' 'no longer two, but one,' and 'joined together,' i.e., soul mates."

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: So if you're married you are soulmates.

Ryan: I love it.

Selena: We are not soulmates to get married.

Ryan: It's not a precursor to marriage. It's a result of marriage is what you're saying.

- Selena:** Yes, yes.
- Ryan:** Very good. Do we ever get to the ancient peace? I feel like we may be glossed over the Greek... Did you get in the Greek side?
- Selena:** I didn't go deep into it.
- Ryan:** Oh, okay.
- Selena:** It's just this idea that a soulmate implies that half of you got taken away at some point. There was a lot of stories in ancient Greek myths about how people were torn apart, and they were incomplete and they didn't have their soulmate. So they were lacking in humungous ways. *[chuckles]* I don't know. Is way more poetic than I could ever say.
- Ryan:** It might be an ancient example of a modern expression of that, which is, in many churches, the single's ministry is oftentimes like kind of the basement ministry. It's the one that they kind of just put off to the side. It's the one that gets kind of the least amount of attention. So you got the family, the marriage ministry, the Men's Ministry, the kids' ministry, the women's ministry. "Oh, yeah, we got to have some singles." And even single friends, they are like... We have at least a few good single friends.
- Selena:** I would say the calling to singleness is probably-
- Ryan:** It's mighty.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And Paul said it was better.
- Selena:** I'd say it's harder too.
- Ryan:** And so I think in Christianity, we need to stop this in our own minds and even in some of the church setting, saying that like because you're not married that somehow you are lacking as a person. That's not a biblical idea. Like Selena said, we are a man, woman made an equal, value, worth, and importance, holy made in the whole image of God.
- Selena doesn't reflect half of God's image and I reflect the other half of God's image. No, we are imprints of the character of the Holy God in a certain way. And so that's kind of a modern expression, a Christian expression of what you've described the ancient Greeks were proponents of.

Selena: Yeah. So, here at Fierce Marriage, we talked about... fierce marriage, it takes a fierce tenacity to never give up and never given in. And this idea of, okay, we're married, we're having a lot of problems. This person over here, maybe I missed my calling, and you are not actually my soulmate?

Do you see how that can kind of wane your tenacity to fight for each other when in those moments that you should be fighting for one another? We shouldn't be looking away. We shouldn't be going to that boat that we talked about, the backup plan, the "well, if this doesn't work out, then I'm going to go over here." No, we burned those ships, we've burned those boats. This idea of soulmate is something we grow into. It is not something that I'm searching for. I've already found it if I've gotten married to... if I've chosen this person.

Ryan: It would be as if you're saying I've hitched my wagon to a lame horse, right? That's not what marriage is.

Selena: No. *[chuckles]* I mean, it is. We are broken.

Ryan: The implication is that if I've hitched my wagon to a lame horse, I'm going to hitch my wagon to a better horse because this horse is lame. *[both chuckles]* No. There's a much deeper union that is on... it can't be reversed from a biblical standpoint. And this idea of mingling of souls, of two becoming one flesh, reflecting, you know, the unity of the Trinity and reflecting the deeper things of God that we don't even know right now I think in this side of heaven and earth.

Marriage is such a deep well. And to understand His design for it definitely helps us understand how this idea of searching for your soulmate is a false premise. Getting married and having your souls become one is not just for your own happiness, which again, this idea of a soulmate is derived from this idea of being selfish and I want happiness and I want this person to only make me happy in the contractual view of "if you're not making me happy, then maybe this is..." We start questioning that.

When truly like, marriage is for our sanctification, for our good, for ultimately God's glory. [00:20:00] And how do we do that? And I would say the first word that comes to my mind is obedience. Because our intimacy in our relationship can only come from our obedience to God, to Scripture. Ephesians 5 is the passage that no one likes to hear but everyone loves to read.

Ryan: I love hearing it.

- Selena:** I do too. About wives submitting and husbands loving and husbands giving themselves up. This is the path. This is the path of obedience, and obedience leads to life into thriving.
- Ryan:** Okay. So, again, looking at this idea of the soulmate and reading that passage now in light of maybe our modern understanding of what a soulmate should be, again, speaking from modern understandings of the term, why should I submit as a wife to a husband who is not honorable, he's not the man that he should be? Why should I love a wife who doesn't respect me? Why should I do that? My soulmate would respect me the way I deserve. My soulmate would be an honorable man, speaking as a wife. *[both laughs]* Don't clip that post it anywhere now.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** See what I'm saying?
- Selena:** The narrative, yeah.
- Ryan:** There is something very counter-cultural about this passage. Now, it's easy to live by this when, Selena, when you and I are doing great, when we're connecting, we're communicating and I'm loving you well, you're loving me well, and everything's grand. But as soon as it gets hard—you use the word "obedience,"—that's when we obey. Because it's easy to do the right thing when the right thing is what I already want to do, right? That's not obedience. That just happens to be a coincidence of-
- Selena:** That's the line of desires of God, I think, when God gives you desires that you should have.
- Ryan:** And it is obedience, but not in the same sense.
- Selena:** Right. I agree.
- Ryan:** It takes a certain amount of submission and trust in God to say, "I'm going to obey you, even when I do not want to because you have said this is my soulmate. It's the mate for my soul."
- Selena:** So good.
- Ryan:** And that was decided that day when we stood before God and witnesses and said, "I do till death do us part." But the problem with Ephesians 5 is people read it and they bring in, they import all of this wrong understanding and all this broken experience into the passage. And what they fail to realize is that

Paul is not creating some new structure within which marriages are now to flourish in light of Pauline's teaching. Paul is just reinforcing. He's showing us the way back to the garden.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Everything that Paul describes in Ephesians 5 toward the end is just here's the path back to the garden before everything broke. There was already a beautiful order in place.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: I'm going a bit off-topic here. But the point is, is that he's not saying, "If this, then that." He's saying, "Do this to get back to that because this is what it looks like to trust the Lord in your marriage." And the soulmate idea would have us believe that if this does not exist, then now I have an excuse to effectively rebel against God. And we would never put it in those terms. But that's what it effectively is.

Selena: Right. And "marrying" the wrong person is not in the Bible. It's not grounds for divorce. We'll just say that. And claiming that you married the wrong person and that you'll never be happy with them until you find your true soulmate, not biblical at all. Both respects.

Ryan: Not biblical. And that's the thing we need to really harp on here. Because listen, if you're watching this, you're listening to this, you're thinking to myself, "I married the wrong person," we're here to tell you that, sorry, but you do not have biblical grounds to pull the plug. You just said.

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: And you need to hear that because if we believe what we're saying here, then our response to that, "Oh, I think I might have made a mistake" is not "I need to run." Instead, it's "I need to run to the arms of the Lord and to pray. I need to ask for intervention. I need to get some community around me. I need to begin loving the way Paul has shown in Corinthians and in Ephesians, trusting the Lord that that love will bear a fruit."

Selena: Right. And I forget where—I should know this verse—where we're called to be imitators of God.

Ryan: Ephesians 5:1.

Selena: It's still Ephesians 5?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Okay, you're right. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: To be imitators of God as dearly loved children. And that's a huge idea that we can't really imitate what we don't have affection for. We can't have affection for that which we have not truly known or experienced. And so the art of knowing God is crucial to us being affectionate toward God and having a chance of imitating God.

Selena: I would agree with that. I can't imitate something I don't know. However, I can imitate someone even if I don't feel like. I can not feel like I want to love you or I can feel all the feelings that you're wrong and that I should go seek out my soulmate. But if I'm an imitator of God, [00:25:00] God's sticks to His covenants. God does not walk away from a covenant that He's made. And so how can I imitate God in this moment?

How did Christ illustrate the love of God? How can we imitate Christ? We don't necessarily go hang on a cross. But what is the cross that we can hang on? That we can say, "I'm going to give up myself for this marriage and this person. And Father forgive them, they know not what they do." I mean, there's no better example.

Ryan: Here's the thing, though. Most would say, yeah, you know, that makes sense. Love would take the bullet, would throw themselves on the grenade so to speak. *[Selena chuckles]* But you know, hanging on a cross is brutal imagery.

And so the where the rubber meets that road is I think of a woman that we know who her husband left her. Tragic. She had, I think, two daughters at home, young. He left. He made all this money, wanted to go live the kind of the player lifestyle, ended up having all these different girlfriends, wives, houses, money, all the things that he could possibly want for 20 years.

We're talking about hanging on across here. We're talking about Paul in Romans talking about being a living sacrifice, someone who dies on a continual basis. When you think about being a sacrifice, that's one thing—you die and it's done. Being a living sacrifice it's ongoing. It never stops.

Worldly version of justice would say that "I don't deserve that. I deserve better. That is brutal. I don't want to die every moment of every day to myself." But that's the call, isn't it? To be a living sacrifice.

Selena: To be imitators.

Ryan: To be imitators of God. And here's the thing. That woman that her husband left for 20 years, she stood for 20 years.

Selena: She contended.

Ryan: I think they might have been officially divorced because that's the paperwork. But she and her mindset, "That's my husband still. I'm not going to..."

Selena: Not in a weird way. She stood for him.

Ryan: She lived her life.

Selena: Yeah, she was contending for her husband's heart, for their marriage. She believes, and she'll tell you today, she believed that God would bring him back and that they will be reunited. And they have.

Ryan: And they were reunited.

Selena: They were

Ryan: Twenty years later, he came back and said, "I'm sorry. I repent." God did something in that man's heart. That woman her whole adult life pretty much... I think about how that ends badly because it doesn't end in the way we want it to. For whatever reason, the contending doesn't end in the way we want it to. That woman could have ended her... she's still alive. But she could be living as a single woman right now, having far fewer resources, having far fewer prospects in terms of life and retirement and all those sorts of things. But God, for some reason, was gracious in that moment. And that man's heart was softened toward her and toward him.

And we are not guaranteed that. That's a really tough, big pill to swallow is that if the soulmate, as we're describing soulmate, the person that we are mingled with, that we are one flesh with, if that person leaves the marriage, we are left with one option—trusting God. Whether or not that person comes back, we're left with one option. That is really hard to swallow. And we're not here just trying to gloss over that.

But if we by God's version of the soulmate, which is the person I'm married to, gets rid of those backup plans, like we talked about last week, burns the ships, if both husband and wife have burned those ships, then you're going to thrive. Even in your conflict you're going to thrive and grow. But if you have bought this idea of a worldly soulmate, and you've thought maybe I missed it, I'm

missing out on something that I deserve something better, greater, happier, whatever, that's where you get that brokenness.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely. Since we've unpacked what kind of the worldly view of a soulmate, how the culture would define that and then how the Bible would define what a soulmate is, how can we then become the soulmates that we desire? How can we then become not just the person that makes our spouse happy, not just the person who, you know, takes care of all the things and loves them well and is perfect? But how do we cultivate intimacy with each other?

You know, if communication is really hard for us, and that's kind of been something that's weird, where it's like 18 years into marriage and sometimes I'm like, "I don't understand anything that you're saying right now." I used to be able to like read your thoughts and now you're saying I try to read your thoughts and I'm not reading them- *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I say things I never said. I get in trouble for things I never said-

Selena: No, not true.

Ryan: ...and she thought I might say. *[both laughs]* I think the first thing is love. So love each other as we ourselves want to be loved. Love each other as yourself. A pithy kind of marriage quote is to be the spouse that you want to be married to. [00:30:00] I think that's a new way of saying the same truth that we heard in the Bible. Love one another as you yourself want to be loved. And that can only be possible if we look to Christ.

Selena: Right. And Ephesians 5 says, you know, for husbands to love your wives as Christ loved the church and wives submit. I shouldn't even just go there. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: It's loaded.

Selena: It's really loaded.

Ryan: It's now what you think it means.

Selena: It's not what you think it means.

Ryan: It's better. Or worse depending on your world view. *[chuckles]*

Selena: It's better.

- Ryan:** I think it's better. I think you think it's better.
- Selena:** Yes. I should say it.
- Ryan:** I can't say that because people will yell at me.
- Selena:** I think that submission is a beautiful picture.
- Ryan:** And I didn't make her say that, *[both laughs]* I promise.
- Selena:** I'm saying this on my own accord. I trust God's word.
- Ryan:** Uh, it's getting hot in here.
- Selena:** So three quick things of how we can cultivate soulmateness I guess. *[Ryan laughs]* How are at the depth, the intimacy of being soulmates, how can we do that in our marriage? The first one would be... All of these encapsulate just spiritual disciplines. So reading your Bible together. God's truth in your life. It is the guidebook, instruction manual, whatever you want to call it. He's given us the path forward, He's written it down. Live in your Bible. Live in the things of God. Pursue understanding and knowledge and wisdom.
- I feel like this is probably one of the first steps if you're struggling in your marriage, to say, what does the Bible say about this? What does the Bible say about the struggles? What does the Bible say about a soulmate? I can't type in soulmate in my Bible. That doesn't come up. *[chuckles]* But what does God say about marriage and about covenant?
- Ryan:** Good. I'm just going to add to reading your Bible, I'm going to say read your Bible well. And what I mean by that is that if you don't understand something, don't stop there. Get commentaries. Learn what it means to read Scripture.
- I'm amazed at how many people don't understand the biblical genres and how genre helps us interpret Scripture faithfully so that we're actually reading for what it means not what we want it to mean or what we think it should mean. So it has to do with how you study the Word. I'm just saying that let's grow out of the milk phase of our lives and let's get into the-
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** ...chewing on the meat of Scripture. And you know what, I think you can do it.
- Selena:** Yeah. God's given you strength. It's fun to wrestle with scripture, I will say that. It's fun because God shows up. And the truth is there, and it's big and bright

and wonderful. And you have those epiphany moments, and you also have just the day-to-day consistency of truth reminding us that we can love one another, I can submit, we can give of ourselves, and that it is beautiful, good thing.

Ryan: That speaks to this piece here is read your Bible, read the Bible well, and read your Bible under its authority. Don't subjugate it to your authority. Don't hold it to your standard, but instead say, "This is the standard of truth, and I'm now going to hold myself to it." That's a different orientation altogether.

Selena: So three spiritual disciplines.

Ryan: First one, Bible reading. Second one, prayer. Pray for each other, pray with each other. If you don't know a lot about what that might look like, we actually have books. Go to 40prayers.com. We have two books: 40 Prayers for My Husband, 40 Prayers for My Wife. They're specifically designed and written by us to help you understand what it means to contend for your spouse before the living good and true God. And so yeah, go to 40prayers.com. You can find those there.

And then the third one is worship.

Selena: Worship.

Ryan: So if a family is reading the Bible together, husband and wife are reading a Bible together, if they're praying together and they're worshipping together, there's a good chance they're going to be a really strong soul mate connection, because they are treating it as such. They're realizing that this marriage of ours is not just about a transaction, it's not just about our attraction to one another. It's about your soul connection that we-

Selena: That need to be cultivated-

Ryan: That needs to be cultivated. We bury the lede.

Selena: ...by the things of God. We do that.

Ryan: We tend to do that. We process in real-time. So worship. Specifically, there's three kind of areas of worship. Traditionally, biblically speaking, there's what's called secret worship, which is between you and God, yourself. That's you and God. Just you. No one else can experience the relationship that you have with God personally. And that's based on scripture, that's based on all that.

Then there's private worship, which is our family worshiping together, devotions around the table, breakfast dinner table at night before you go to bed, gathering around the warm fire of the Word of God. Okay.

And then public worship. Be a part of a church. Like the church is not some arbitrary thing. It's God's idea. It's God's design. Go enjoy, be part of it, add to the body of believers. If you do that as a couple, that will help you become soulmates on a deeper level, right?

Selena: So just our prayer and encouragement is, God, help us to demystify this idea that we missed marrying our soulmate. Like give us eyes to see, soften our hearts, [00:35:00] enlarge in our hearts to love one another the way you have loved us.

And so we would just pray that for you. We pray that God would just help you wherever you're at in your marriage, the struggles, the joys, all of the things all of the days. You didn't miss your soulmate; your soulmate is right next to you. And God has given them a gift... Sorry, given you a gift in them. You've gotten a gift in me. *[laughs]*

So a couple's conversation challenge. Something you guys can maybe wrestle with and talk about is, how can we begin cultivating one of these spiritual disciplines together?

Ryan: That's good. That's good.

Selena: All right.

Ryan: What a relief it is to know that you are with your soulmate!

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: You don't have to wonder. All you need to do is trust. Trust the Lord. Love the way He showed you to love, love the way He commanded you to love, and trust Him. What a gift! What a relief!

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this woman of mine that you've given me this gift in Selena. I pray for the husbands and wives watching and hearing this that they would be encouraged, that they would be stricken with a sense of wonder and awe and your design. And I pray that they would see a way forward to find that first step down this path toward whatever journey they're on, whether it's a challenge or whether it's a change or just growing as a couple. Lord, that you would bless them, allow them to flourish for their good and your glory. In Your name Jesus. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- Scripture references:
 - Ephesians 5

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