

THE 3 P'S THAT CAN POISON YOUR MARRIAGE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-3-ps-that-can-poison-your-marriage>

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Ryan: You know what, Selena? It's hard enough to build a healthy, long-lasting, lifelong marriage without things poisoning the marriage,-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...without things getting in the way. So today we're talking about three P's— gotta love the alliteration. Gotta have P's—that will poison your marriage. So I'm excited for this episode. This is actually a resurrected post from - how many years ago did I write this?

Selena: I think two years ago.

Ryan: No, it was way back. *[laughs]*

Selena: Everything's like two years ago in my head. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I would say it's probably five or more years ago-

Selena: Really?

Ryan: ...when I wrote this blog article called 3 P's that will... That's when blogs were a thing.

Selena: You still got it.

Ryan: We still have blog articles, if that's your thing, if you want to read. But yeah, 3 P's that can poison your marriage. And we'll go ahead and we'll actually share what those P's are. But you're going to have to stay tuned and follow us too. See you on the other side.

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Selena: So if you're new to Fierce Marriage, I'm Selena Frederick. This is Ryan Frederick.

Ryan: Greetings.

Selena: We are the voices and faces of Fierce Marriage. And today we are going to talk about the three P's that can poison your marriage. But before we do that, Ryan, why don't you lead us off in what we should do before we do that?

Ryan: Well, if you're new just enjoy the content. We're here to hopefully bless you, to point you to Christ, and to help you have a healthier marriage. If you have been with us for a little while, you've probably heard us say this, maybe you haven't acted on it yet.

So here it is again. Go ahead and like, subscribe, leave a comment to this video, subscribe to the YouTube channel, subscribe to the podcast and your platform of choice. That's like the first thing you can do to go a little bit deeper with this community.

The second thing is if you feel called, if you feel led, this ministry, Fierce Marriage, we also have the parenting side, Fierce Parenting is completely funded by two things: selling books, so if you bought our books, thank you, and also our Patreon supporters. Those are the people that just say, Hey, we care about what you're doing, we want to be a part of it. Even though we can't be in the room with you, we still want to join arms with you, so to speak.

If that is something you feel God is calling you to do, just pray about it. If He continues to call you to do it, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner There's all kinds of options there in terms of tiers and how you can engage. And I will say this, there's some bonuses to be had-

Selena: Oh, Bebe.

Ryan: ...for those who would feel so led. But that's not the reason we do it.

Selena: It's not the reason we do it.

Ryan: We are all about the fierce mission.

Selena: Fierce mission. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Okay, so 3 P's. I feel very titillated. What are these P's? Now, since I wrote this blog post years back, I actually forgot what the P's are.

Selena: Oh my! Well, we're just going to come out of the gate because I think we had a little bit... I think we would do you a disservice if we didn't kind of lay the groundwork a little bit of why these 3 P's are so poisonous to our marriage.

So like you said in the beginning, having godly marriage... having a marriage, in general, is hard, right? But I can't imagine doing it without the Lord, the one who created it, purposed it, ordained it. There's no way we could have a life-filled, godly marriage that is generous to those around us and is able to pour out I think if you're just kind of surviving in your own. You know that it's hard to give of yourself and your marriage if it's not centered on Christ-

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: ...and it's not actively seeking and learning and reading and being in God's word, being in the body of Christ and worshipping Him together. So...

Ryan: We have this propensity for poison, I think, is what we have in the outline here. We have what does that even mean? Okay, so we said it's hard. But the reason it is hard to build a Christ-centered marriage, to build a healthy marriage, we don't drift naturally toward just being connected.

Selena: Unified and oneness.

Ryan: We don't drift naturally toward obeying the spirit as opposed to the flesh, right?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: We tend to want to be more fleshly. We tend to want to be more isolated in our selfishness and in our pride and in our conflict. So we have this propensity for poison. And where's that even coming from? I think is the first question. A few scriptures. You'll have heard some of these, but I want to just make sure that they're clear in the top of our mind.

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Take a second and don't just hear that for maybe a cliché verse. It is so foundational. All have sinned. We have all actively rebelled against God. We are not just the recipients of His wrath because someone else made it so we deserve. No, we deserve it on our own accounts. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Okay?

If we just hear that part of the message, it's pretty sad. Like, "Oh, great. I'm outside of God's good graces. There's nothing I can do. I've fallen short." That's not the end of the story.

Another verse, though, Romans 3:10, "...as it is written, 'None is righteous, no, not one...'" So remember, in the conflict in these areas of your marriage, [00:05:00] remember that you could be wrong. You could be the one that's

the perpetrator in this situation. And so that's kind of calibrating for us that no one is righteous, no one is perfect, not even one. Well, there is one. And his name is Jesus Christ. We'll get to that a little bit.

1 John 1:10, this one is a heart check for us. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and his word is not in us." Many humanists, many who would be more therapeutic deists, right, they think there is a God, and He just basically wants me to be a good person. Right?

That essentially is diminishing our view of God and raising our view of ourselves. And John, in this passage is saying, If we say we have not sinned, in other words, if we don't call sin what it is, then it's not that we're just kind of fooling ourselves, no. It's we are calling him, Christ, God, a liar. Would you call God a liar to His face?

Selena: Absolutely not.

Ryan: No, no. And here's the other thing is His Word is not in us. So it's saying what we're doing but then it's also saying, Here's the reason why you're calling God a liar. Because His word is not in you. In other words, you don't have the truth of God, you have something else. So if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. So we have this propensity, this nature that pulls us into kind of sinful behaviors. And they're symptoms of that nature.

Selena: I think this propensity for poison also started in the garden, where, you know, Genesis 3, there's the fall, Eve, eats of the fruit that the enemy, you know, says, "Oh..." He starts questioning everything, and then they start looking within themselves for a place to hide or to blame or to be sufficient for themselves. Like, "Ah, the woman made me do it," is what he says. And then we start, we start elevating either people, things, or whatever it is into this place of God. We start creating these idols.

Ryan: I think the greatest tragedy of sin and of this propensity that we have for poison in our marriage and in our lives is that each one is actually us actively dethroning God in our lives. That's a scary thing. And you had said something about idols.

Selena: We're idol factories. So we're constantly trying to erect things that we can worship, that makes us feel good about ourselves, that justify ourselves, when really, like you said at the beginning, we are sinners and we are in rebellion towards God until He calls us to repentance and we respond and repent. There's nothing that we can do outside of ourselves to put Him where He needs to be.

Ryan: And these things are most obvious when we're being squeezed. Okay? If you're in a great place, you're going to be doing all the right things because hey, why wouldn't you if you're in a great place, and you're feeling pretty healthy?

But what happens when we get squeezed? That's when our true stuff really comes out? So when you're squeezed financially, when you're having a hard time, do you run to Christ, do you run to God as your provider, or do you run to yourself? And what that looks like is you're hustling harder, you're working longer hours-

Selena: Yeah, you're compromising, you know, all the things that you talked about. You know, being home on time to be with your family, commuting to different jobs or going on longer trips to just get that paper.

Ryan: Yeah. Well, there are nuances there because there's a time to kind of-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...put your head down and get work done. But it's where's your heart orientation in that? Or when you're struggling with one another in your intimate life and it's not where you hoped it would be or it's just you're frustrated with it, where do you run in that? Men, do you run toward pornography? Do you run toward finding satisfaction elsewhere? Or are you running into the arms of God and saying, "God help me in this"?

Remember when we were squeezed, that's when our true stuff is shown? What's really in us comes gushing out. And so I think this is kind of a heart check as we look at these P's that could poison our marriage because each one has to do with what happens in these areas when you're squeezed. So do you want us to go into the three Ps?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: 3 P's that can poison your marriage real quick are pennies, which we will talk about, the financial aspect of your marriage, perversion, having to do with intimacy and purity, and then pride.

Ryan: Oh.

Selena: Pride, pride, pride.

Ryan: So how does this first P (pennies) poison our marriage? What's say you? *[both chuckles]*

Selena: I think that oftentimes, you know, you're on social media, you're looking at whatever and see people on vacation, you just get this envy and this covetous spirit of "Yeah, of course, they're, you know, in a cabin up in the woods. They're so rich, they have all the money, they can do all the fun things in all the different seasons, right? And we start comparing-

Ryan: Little did you know that they rented that for half a day *[both laughing]* [00:10:00] so they could do a photoshoot and go home edit their photos-

Selena: No.

Ryan: ...in their studio apartment. *[laughs]*

Selena: No. But the comparison game is real, right? It's a misplacement of our identity. We start wanting these things that we don't have. And we start strategizing how can we get these things, and at what cost? We kind of ignore the cost because we want the thing.

Those should be setting off red flags for us of, okay, where does our identity lie? Does it lie in the fact that I can do all these fun things and post it on social media? Or does it lie in fact that Christ died for me and I can live in the confidence and fullness of Him? And I don't have to be doing all these things that I see to be living in that area.

Ryan: I wouldn't even say that it shows itself off of social media too when you think that, if I could just have the thing, then I would have the problem that I have solved.

Selena: Right. The next promotion or the next-

Ryan: Or just the gadget, or the vehicle or the property or the whatever the... you know, a pet. Whatever that thing is that-

Selena: That tension point

Ryan: ...money would get you. And so what happens is, is that begins to... if you're not in agreement on that, and you continually strive towards something without context, without understanding what God says about money, or letting what he says bear full weight on your hear, that can drive a wedge into your marriage, and then it's going to lead to disunity, it's going to lead to

argument, it's going to lead to a deep kind of despair because you're trying to find your security in something that was not designed, cannot bear it, cannot bear the weight of the human condition.

And of course, we have words from Christ Himself that would dispel this lie. Why don't you read Matthew 6 starting in verse 25 through 31.

Selena: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

Ryan: Yeah. We had a time in our marriage where... Do you remember this? So we're from Washington State, we moved down to the desert of Southern California. And we had this apartment, which it was an amazing apartment. It was in our budget, we loved it. And I was working as a web developer freelance, had a brand new like kind of agency. And by all definitions of the term, we were living hand to mouth. We had no money in the bank, we had all this debt from poor financial decisions and just kind of we had a history of I got sick in the hospital. There was a lot of debt there.

And I remember sitting out... it was a warm night and I was sitting out on our deck and I was just so angry with God. Right? The audacity. *[both chuckles]* I'm just kind of panicking. I pictured Michael Scott when he comes in after he realizes that the branches closings. We are through. It's over.

[video plays] Michael: All I can do right now is put on a brave face and go out there and be their leader. It's over. We are screwed. Dunder Mifflin Scranton is being shut down.

Ryan: No, but it was that kind of sense of like it's over, we're through. And God in his graciousness, He gave me... I don't know what I would call it, but it was a loving rebuke. I was going to say a slap in the face. But I don't think I'd survive that if God decided to slap me in the face.

But He basically said, "Ryan, listen," he said, "You are not your provider, I am. So it's not your ingenuity, it's not your ability to find the next project, the next client to even get them to pay the money that they owe you. You are not your provider. I'm your provider." Right? Just the other day.

Selena: Which I was going to say it wasn't just like, "Okay, God, got it. Done!

Ryan: No.

Selena: And that was one of the big stones that was put into place for our marriage and our understanding of God. But it is a constant like, God's like, "All right, I got a medium stone for you now." Same message different way you're going to learn it though. And then oh, here's another stone. Like, He just keeps filling us up and sanctifying us through the same message of He is our provider. And I mean, the most, I think, tangible way that we see that is through our finances. You were going to say the other day?

Ryan: Well, just the other day I was kind of in this place of lament because we're always trying to figure out how to make ministry work online. Now, God has been so gracious to us. I don't want to act like it's been a huge struggle this whole time. God has been gracious, we've been able to provide for our family.

But I'm always kind of [00:15:00] thinking and angling and figuring how can we make this more sustainable? Because who knows, they could just take one algorithm change, one policy change on social media, one policy change on Amazon, or one internet hiccup, and all of a sudden like our livelihoods gone. And I thought, "How can I make it more sustainable?" And I was praying through that. And the same loving rebuke came and He's like, he said, "Ryan, this is sustainable because I sustain you, not because you've figured it out."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: "It's sustainable because I make it sustainable. I sustain you." And this was God kind of impressing upon my heart these truths. And so I think that's true for you, whether you're self-employed, whether you... whatever socio-economic class, striation you would place yourself in, our very lives are sustainable in Him, we live and breathe and move. Like it's only through the power of His word that this universe is even sustained. And we are so quick to think that we have so much agency.

Now, we are called to diligence, we are called to stewardship, we are called to being fruitful workers, and faithful workers, I should say.

Selena: But that's from a point of acknowledging who our provider is and who sustains us no matter what.

Ryan: So, that's the first P.

Selena: First P was pennies.

Ryan: Pennies. And of course-

Selena: It paints that picture, right? *[Ryann chuckles]* The pennies.

Ryan: The first P poison, pennies. The second one is a perversion. Now, full disclosure, it does have to do with sex and intimacy. But before we go any further, I want to actually read what the dictionary defines perversion to be. Perversion is this. "It's an alteration of something from its original course, meaning, or state to a distortion or corruption of what was first intended out. Now, let that sink in. It's a corruption and a distortion of away from what was first intended.

So now, okay, think about that in terms of your sex life, and how that could become a poison into your marriage. Now, sex and intimacy are huge parts of marriage. Now, that's true, but it's also... like it's a very small fraction of the time you spend in marriage-

Selena: Yeah, the actual time you spend.

Ryan: Yeah. But the impact of it is far reached.

Selena: Emotionally and spiritually I think.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: I love this. Thinking about it in these terms, as we think about original intent is that God created sex as a physical confirmation of a spiritual truth. It's a way to express the nakedness and vulnerability of our souls through our bodies. Right? Remember, in Genesis 2, the two became one flesh. That was a consummation of the unity that they were spiritually experiencing as a couple. I'm talking about Adam and Eve, of course. It's a confirmation to express the nakedness and vulnerability of our souls through our bodies. That's the baseline.

And we've talked about these kinds of perspectives of sex many times. Actually, we have a free course that just went live on our YouTube channel. So go an episode back and you'll find that. But that's one of the basic things is that this is not just a physical thing as God defines it. Sex is far beyond just our bodies. It goes all the way into our hearts, our souls, and into our spirits, which-

Ryan: We started seeing the perversion of it when selfishness starts to creep in, we start getting a distorted view of what sex is. Obviously, pornography has played a big role in that. And also a person's past and sexual abuse, which we don't want to gloss over. Whenever we're talking about sex and intimacy, we are not trying to, I guess, prescribe anything. We are not counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, whatever. We are not any of those things. We are just kind of sharing what we know.

Not to gloss over like if you've been sexually abused, then there are going to be some other battles that you'll face in terms of marriage and intimacy with your spouse. However, God is good, He is big, and He is incredible. And He is the healer, He is the restorer, the redeemer of any past.

Ryan: That is unique though. I want to jump in because it's the one kind of P that we're going to talk about here where you can experience the poison of it and you can experience perversion in your marriage without it being your fault. That's what you're saying.

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: Right. If you came from a history of being sexually abused, that is not without consequence in your marriage. Now, God is gracious and His Word does heal us. The gospel does heal us. Yes, while we don't want to gloss over, like Selena said, I also want to say God is enough to heal that area in your marriage.

There's also the husband or the wife who their spouse has been unfaithful to them. Either through the lust of their eyes or through physical affair and emotional affair they've proven in some way unfaithful. Now, that's not that spouse's fault [00:20:00] if they've been sinned against, right? And so they're experiencing this poison, this perversion in this area.

And so to find healing in that the first step is, like we did early on, look at God's design for sex. Look at God's vision for intimacy. what are the purposes that it fulfills? And how do you find healing out of these areas?

Selena: I think part of dealing with some of the poison or the hurt that may have happened to you and is now kind of manifesting itself in your intimate life with

your spouse is that we can go to the body of Christ. We can go to the pastors, we can go to Christian counselors maybe within our church even to help us through these challenges and these battles because they are unique and there are some...

Yes, God is enough and His body that He's given, the body of Christ, right, of believers can help us through this. But I don't believe it's something you do on your own and just be like, "All right, God's enough, I can do it." That's not wise.

So just to put that out there, if you're dealing with sexual abuse or any sort of distortion within your marriage that is harmful, and addiction with pornography, that would fit in there as well, definitely seek help. And I would start with your church, and your pastors and your shepherds.

Ryan: Can't overstate that enough. Do not do that. Do not face that perversion alone.

Selena: Any of those battles, yeah.

Ryan: Get help, get accountability, get prayer and get real pastoral care. It's so important. So the first P was pennies. The second P was perversion. And now the third P, which is pride, right?

Selena: It's kind of all encapsulating,-

Ryan: It is.

Selena: ...I think, of the first two P's. But-

Ryan: I mean, we did a video actually. It's this one thing that can kill a marriage. It's the great marriage killer. And that's pride.

Selena: Spoiler alert. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Well, no, go back and watch that video. But the reason pride is so poisonous is because it always elevates the self above everything else, everything else.

Selena: And it hardens the heart, I think. It hardens the heart, it elevates. It stops you from being soft and I think able to engage with your spouse at an equal level, right? Again, you're elevating yourself. You don't want to lose that argument, you don't want to be wrong, you don't want to be the one to apologize because clearly, they're the one that has caused the problem. Right?

Ryan: You don't want to serve one another, right? You set yourself up-

- Selena:** You don't want to... Sorry, go ahead. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** You set yourself up as the most kind of the center of the universe, that is your marriage or that is your family. So I think it's helpful at this point. Because pride is such a big concept, let's kind of reel it in, bring it down into real terms.
- So here are some examples of what pride functionally looks like within a marriage. The first one is being right is a primary concern over and above showing love. *[chuckles]* Here's an example for husbands. And maybe we'll go through this quickly after this. *[Selena laughs]* But it's possible to be factually correct but completely wrong in how you love your wife.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And being correct, you can like-
- Selena:** Amen. *[both laughs]* Just kidding.
- Ryan:** Listen, the coin has two sides to it.
- Selena:** Yes, it does.
- Ryan:** So it's not just about being factually right, it's about loving one another well. And pride would trick us into thinking that it's most important to be factually right because truth is truth, right? No one saying truth is not true. But we are saying that love sometimes... that's why we're called to speak the truth in love. It sounds like the Bible have something to say about this.
- Selena:** Oh, my goodness!
- Ryan:** Now, what's the second one?
- Selena:** Forgiving is difficult if not seemingly impossible. So that's kind of an indicator that pride is alive and well in your marriage. If you are not seeking to apologise, and owning up whatever your offence is, whatever your responsibility is, and the argument, the conflict, whatever it is, if you're not asking and seeking forgiveness-
- Selena:** Or giving it. That's the thing.
- Selena:** Or giving it, yeah, agree.

Ryan: Because giving someone forgiveness when you feel that sense of self-righteousness, what is self-righteousness if it's not a pride in my own moral standing compared to you? So why should I forgive you? You hurt me. Well, you should forgive because He's forgiving us.

Selena: That's so much work.

Ryan: But a prideful person would have a hard time recognizing, acknowledging, and obeying that command.

Selena: That leads us to the next one. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Third one is, not submitting to leadership inside or outside of the marriage. I'll just leave that one to loom over it.

Selena: Not humbling oneself, the next one, to study the Bible or attend church regularly. I think this is a huge, huge, huge one. And I think just in the day and age that we're in, going to church... I don't know. I feel like we kind of fall to the wayside because of sickness or whatever's happening, right? Like, Oh, kids are sick all the time. I guess we just won't go to church or we're tired or whatever. It's like no, we need to [00:25:00] make an effort.

If you're healthy and you're awake, and you're just a little tired, get up. We got to go to church. Don't forsake the gathering. And I'm not saying that that just leads you to being prideful. But it definitely is an indicator, I think, if you cannot regularly meet and gather with the body of Christ, and you're not seeking to do that.

Ryan: Well, because you don't think you need it.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: It's a net negative to you if you're filled with pride because you're not there to actually hear the Word of God or let it bear its weight on your everlasting soul. You're there to be effectively entertained. You're there to be validated in some way. You're there to get from people a relational gratification that you want from having friends or from hearing, you know, for whatever reason, right?

So, if you're not going to church regularly, that's an indication that that pride is probably festering in that area of your life. Also studying the Bible. It's not about how much you read, it's about how deep you read. And you can read deeply into 10 chapters or deeply into even just a word in Scripture.

- Selena:** Right. But I think pride can interrupt that. Pride can say, "I read my Bible yesterday, I'm good," or "you know, I haven't really gotten a lot out of Leviticus. I'm good." *[laughs]* There's stuff in Leviticus, let me tell you. If anything, the Old Testament reveals so many characteristics, the holiness of God, the justness of God. I can't even... Like how do you read the New Testament without reading the Old Testament? I just-
- Ryan:** Selena's study on the Book of Leviticus is forthcoming. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** The Book of Leviticus as it applies to parenting and marriage.
- Selena:** Everybody will buy that, right? *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** So those ones are huge ones. So let's go through these other ones fast. We have about 10 more. Another sign that pride is taking root in your marriage arguments never resolved, they just sputter out and go underground. We should do wildland firefighting and fires have an uncanny ability to spread underground through root systems and structures. You have to get all the way down to that and root it out and deal with it. Otherwise, it'll continue to spread.
- The next one is this Quote unquote, why should I apologize if I'm not wrong? Why should I apologize if I'm not wrong? Why are you looking at me? *[laughs]*
- Selena:** I don't know. I'm saying, Why should I apologize when I'm not wrong? Maybe you weren't wrong in your facts of truth, maybe, but how you presented it.
- Ryan:** Yeah, there's more-
- Selena:** Because why should you apologize *[chuckles]* if you're not wrong? I'm trying to understand this.
- Ryan:** It's more than one way to be wrong. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** There it is. There's truth right there.
- Ryan:** Strictly clinically, I've never experienced this, but I can just tell you that I've read books that talk about these mysterious ways that one can be wrong.
- Selena:** He's been wrong very... many, many times since this man has been wrong. But I love him.

- Ryan:** Next one.
- Selena:** And I will follow him blindly. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** All right. All right, you need to write a book on Leviticus. *[both laughs]* Follow me blindly. Okay. The next big way that you can tell that pride is taking root in your marriage is there is a lack of transparency. We wrote a whole book on transparency. Talk about writing books, we actually wrote a whole book on transparency. It's called "See Through Marriage. Check that out if you want to go deeper into the topic of transparency.
- Selena:** This next one is quote-unquote, "I can handle this by myself." And I think women tend to... at least my observation is that women tend to fall into this more easily if they're just like, "I can handle this. I got it." You know, they kind of pushed the dad to the outskirts and like, "I'm going to take the kids, we're going to do the thing, you can kind of come be a part of it because yeah, you're the dad." But I think we really have to be careful of this as wives and mothers, to think that we can just do this on our own because we can't. We just can't.
- Ryan:** And men if you're dealing with some sort of struggle, I think that goes hand in hand with the lack of transparency. You think that you can deal with a habitual sin without bringing your wife into the equation, without bringing brothers in Christ into the equation. That's a point of pride. You think that you can handle it alone when scripture expressively tells us to confess our sins to one another.
- Selena:** And pray for each other.
- Ryan:** And to pray for one another and not to fester in our sin alone. It doesn't say, Figure out your sin alone, then come to the gathering. It says, "Confess your sins. He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins." So confessing to God, confessing to one another.
- The next one is hearing words without hearing hearts. I struggle with this a lot. Because I'll hear you say something and it'll tweak something in my guts.
- Selena:** *[inaudible]* like, "That's not all what I've said."
- Ryan:** That's not what you-
- Selena:** Those are the words that came out of my mouth-
- Ryan:** "But that's not what I meant."
- Selena:** ...but that's not what I meant.

- Ryan:** Okay, this next one, selfish financial decisions. What do we know about that? I don't know anything about it. *[Selena laughs]* Too soon? *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Well, we didn't pay for it so it's not really the actual decision. It doesn't fall into that category.
- Ryan:** It doesn't cost us anything to own a dog? Is that what you're saying? *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Never buy a puppy without informing your husband and surprising him on his birthday.
- Ryan:** I'm going to go ahead and revise what you just said. Never buy a puppy when your husband expressively says, *[both laughs]* "Do not buy us a puppy?" I think-
- Selena:** I didn't actually buy it. So this is where the-
- Ryan:** Regardless of what this looks like, we've actually worked it out.
- Selena:** Yeah, we did. [00:30:00]
- Ryan:** The dog is great.
- Selena:** He loves Charlie.
- Ryan:** But we're going to get some mileage out of it. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** As we should. Thank you, Lord. Quickness to anger and frustration. I love that you pointed that one out for me because that's where I fall for sure. Quickness to anger and frustration. Just being so prideful that I just get angry. Why can't you do it the right way? Why can't you do it the way I want you? Why are you the way that you are? *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Oh, I hate the things that you choose to be.
- Selena:** You know, you know.
- Ryan:** Okay. And then the final one that we'll hit today is this inability to acknowledge your own fault in any of these equations or conversations that you're having, arguments that you're having. Listen, marriage takes two. And I guarantee you, if you're having marital strife, you're fighting, you're arguing, both of you are going to be at fault in some way. And so if you both are assuming pride or

you're avoiding pride, then you will both say, "I repent. Forgive me of my fault in this. Let's work through together. Let's be reconciled."

And here's the thing is pride acts as a wall that blocks intimacy. Every time, if left unchecked, the poison of pride will leave both of you out in the cold, right? You will not be able to come close, to warm up. Not literally but emotionally. You know, maybe literally. You'll be left out in the cold. You'll be left out to fend for yourself against attacks, against hardship. So Humility is the converse of this. And it is-

Selena: It's very disarming.

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: It brings down the tension, deflates the self. Pride would puff us up but humility keeps us I think right where God wants us, right? To remember that we too are sinners, we too are broken, we too need the grace and forgiveness and compassion of God.

And I think that whenever I've experienced feeling loved and knowing that I'm loved with Ryan is when I have been wrong and he has graciously forgiven me and shown me grace and mercy, and still acceptance, I think.

You know, we don't approve of the sin, there's a difference between approval and acceptance. But he's accepted me, you know, and accepted my apology and accepted that I fall short here and I may fall short here again. And we might be at this position again where I'm, you know, apologizing and asking for forgiveness. But that's what keeps us connected. That's what keeps us soft.

Because the cycle is going to change and he's going to come to me. And how do I respond to that? God put that in place as a way for us to be sanctified, as a way for us to love one another and to submit to one another as we also submit to Christ.

Ryan: It's helpful to contrast. We're going to contrast pride and humility really quick. And like we said kind of at the beginning of this third P is that pride is really all-encompassing. So let's contrast real quickly.

Now, when we think about pride, think about your prideful orientation toward God or your prideful orientation to your spouse or to others as we're going through these. So the first one is this. Pride controls where humility relinquishes control. Pride is defensive, humility removes defenses. Pride is a sign of weakness, humility is a sign of strength. Really? *[both chuckles]* Like really? Yeah. Think about somebody who's a strong leader or a strong

personality. If they're really strong, they're not going to be telling everybody that they're strong.

Selena: They're not to shout it.

Ryan: They're not to shout it. Finally, prideful people are resistant to God and view others as the problem whereas humble people respond to God and to others. We're being vulnerable in a way that's actually meaningful toward one another.

So three P's: pennies, perversion, and pride. And they are all poisonous. But we have good news. There is an antidote. There is a cure for this poison. And you probably guessed it. What is that cure?

Selena: His name is Jesus.

Ryan: His name is Jesus. *[chuckles]* Now, are we saying that you just need to, you know, try to love Jesus more, see Him more closely, and He will just come in and swoop in and fix all your sin all at once and fix all your problems all at once? Unfortunately, that's not our experience, nor is that seen in Scripture.

Instead, we see a patient, steadfast, long-suffering Christ who will walk alongside us as a shepherd. Not as somebody who's just lording His lordship over us. No. He is Lord, He is king, but He operates as a shepherd, as somebody who lovingly pastors His sheep, lovingly heals His sheep.

And so to converse every one of these P's really quickly, for pennies, Jesus is the antidote. In this way, Jesus promises that God will supply all our needs. Right? We read that verse. What's the one for perversion?

Selena: Jesus assures us that we are a new creation and our minds will be renewed. We see that in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Ryan: Regardless of our past, regardless of our current experience, [00:35:00] the Lord is faithful to renew our mind.

Selena: When we're humble, yeah. When we are humble and we repent and we go to Him.

Ryan: And then for pride, He's the antidote in this: He shows us the ultimate example of humility and selfless love on the cross. And an example of that is in Philippians 2:8. Being found in human form, he humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, which was a humiliating, painful, excruciating death.

Okay, so each one of these things are poisonous. And we've had some fun in this episode, but I don't want that to downplay just how insidious each one of these P's is and how damaging it will be over time if not dealt with, if not cured with the antidote. We have to take the antidote all the time, daily. And the antidote, his name is Christ.

So if you're at a loss, where do you start? If find yourself struggling with any one of these things, I think the best thing we can tell you to do is pray, is pray. Go humbly before God, ask Him to bring healing in these areas of your marriage.

And I think that'll be our couples conversation challenge is take these three P's to your spouse, say, "Listen, this crazy couple on the internet talked about these three P's that could poison a marriage, pennies, perversion and pride. Here's what they said. Where can we begin to seek the Lord? Which area jumps out at you? And how can you seek the Lord in that area?" Does that sound good?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: All right. With that said, Selena, do you want to pray us out?

Selena: Lord, thank you for your guidance. Thank you for saving us, for coming to us, for putting on flesh that is so finite. Thank you that you came and you died and you modeled humility in a way that we can barely come close to even trying to be like. And it's all by your grace, Lord.

And I pray that you would give couples that are listening or watching just clarity and promptings to have these conversations honestly and humbly and in confidence that you will guide them, you will give them clarity and transparency and ability to be honest with one another. We praise you and thank you for all that you've given us. In Your name. Amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right, this episode of the Fierce Marriage show—it's not just a podcast anymore—is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: See you again in about seven days. So until then[chuckles]

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:04:10]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Romans 3:23
 - Romans 3:10
 - 1 John 1:10

- **[00:11:44]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Matthew 6:25:31

- **[00:34:48]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Philippians 2:8

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