

6 WAYS TO AFFAIR-PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE (REMIX)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/6-ways-to-affair-proof-your-marriage-remix>

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Selena: Every spouse's greatest fear, right, that you would find out one day that your husband, your wife has taken their affections elsewhere, they've had an affair, they've had either a physical affair or an emotional affair. And it's an atomic bomb that goes off in the life of any couple who experiences that.

And so we've spent a good bit of time thinking through where does the affair actually begins in those cases? And how can we, as wise stewards of our hearts, our covenant, wise stewards of our marriage, how can we be proactive in affair proofing your marriage? So we'll see you on the other side.

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Selena: We have walked alongside of few couples that have unfortunately dealt with infidelity and emotional affairs, and there is a lot of obviously regret, there's a lot of hurt, and pain and trust, it's broken, and they're working on rebuilding it. I think that God also is gracious in how He renews the relationship after the fact.

But no one wants to walk through anything like that. And so we believe that there are a few ways that we can be proactive in order to avoid the situations in order to protect our marriage and affair proof it.

Ryan: Yeah, so you're watching this, listening to this, probably with one of three different mindsets. You're probably thinking, "Hey, this might be a good idea just so we're being proactive." Okay, so if you're in that spot, then you haven't detected yet or you haven't experienced fractures in your trust yet, the second maybe potential way that you could be hearing this is you're thinking, "Something's not quite right. I feel like we've lost something in our relationship." And that's prompted you to watch this to listen to this.

And the third perspective is perhaps could be you've experienced it and you don't want to experience it again. And so you are trying to gain wisdom in this area, because it's bound with hurt, and it's wrapped up with pain you felt. And so we're trying to be sensitive to that.

We don't know exactly your situation. We don't know exactly where you're coming from. So we're going to speak through our experience of working with other couples, through studying marriage, through teaching on, speaking on, writing about marriage and all the topics around it, and give you pretty quickly

six really tangible ways that you can affair-proof your marriage. So let's dive into this. What do you think?

Selena: I think outside of the gospel, it's almost impossible for people to reconcile, I think, after trust has been broken in such a deep way. There's a lot of fear and shame that you often have to sort through. But again, without the gospel, without the context of Scripture, sin, repentance, forgiveness, grace, what those things are, what they look like, and how they're lived out after the trust is broken, it doesn't paint a very good picture. It's not hopeful, right? The gospel gives us hope in any situation.

So we're coming from a biblical perspective, from a gospel, scriptural perspective of how do affair-proof, protect, steward this relationship, this marriage that God has given us? So 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Ryan: Perfect love drives out fear. And I think that really does sum up the gospel. Because who has given us perfect love? I haven't given you perfect love, unfortunately. I've yet to receive perfect love from you.

Selena: I always give perfect love. *[both chuckles]* Let the record show. Just kidding.

Ryan: And I'm being honest in that. I think we can say that honestly it's not a knock on my wife. It's just the fact that you're human, I'm human. We're sinners and we're saved by grace. And the one who saves us has given us that perfect love.

And that is that very centering foundational aspect of our faith that says, I am not perfect, but God has intervened and He has become flesh. And He has bridged the insurmountable divide between us and Him through his own sacrifice so that I can now love. And so now I need not fear. I need not fear. My shame has no power over me.

And so it's from that foundation of a very clear sense of identity that I'm able to live honestly. And that starts with living honestly with God, living honestly with myself. Oh, I'm actually not as awesome as I probably would like to believe. I actually need a lot more from God [00:05:00] than I originally thought.

And I think as we grow and mature and grow in age and mature in the Lord, we realize more and more that God is so, so, so much better than I ever thought yesterday and the day before that. And so I'm able to live honestly with God, with myself, I'm also able to live honestly with my wife.

And so honesty is going to be, I think the first, and probably in a lot of ways, the most pivotal kind of way... or I don't know what. We would call these key.

Selena: Yeah. We're calling these... so think of them as like a gate around your covenant, your marriage. And so this gate of honesty of keeping your communication open and transparent, it really is going to keep that gate closed to any outside affairs, whether they be emotional-

Ryan: I'll make sure we get the right picture. So you're saying there's a fence around our marriage?

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And it's got various gates in it. And each one of these gates is going to be an opportunity for-

Selena: Preserving the life of our marriage inside or allowing sin to come in-

Ryan: Got you.

Selena: ... and break down and kill whatever life that we had within our marriage. And so committing to being honest, that would be the first thing. Committing to be honest and open with each other in our communication.

Transparency is hard but it's a huge part of this ministry. I think that's one of the areas that people have given us the most feedback is that "you're so honest and transparent with each other. How do you build that?" And we've actually written a book on it for being transparent in marriage called *See Through Marriage*.

And if you haven't found that, go pick it up, go check it out. We go into a lot of depth about how to cultivate marriage that is transparent, that is glorifying to God, and how to be honest with each other.

Ryan: And I think maybe the most valuable aspect of that book is it establishes the basis for our transparency. The basis for our transparency is what we mentioned earlier. It's the love of God and Christ. We are able to love because he has first loved us. And that love looks like honesty. It looks like knowing what truth is, valuing truth enough and valuing your marriage enough, valuing your spouse enough to actually live in light of the truth.

In 1 John 1 says, "We walk in the light as He is in the light so that we might have fellowship." That's what marriage is. It's fellowship with one another in

the covenant of marriage. "And so that we might be cleansed from unrighteousness." So walking in the light. It's just such a visceral picture.

We have this kind of saying our marriage, especially when we started walking this way, it wasn't until about, I don't know, 5, 6, 7 years into our marriage, we started having true transparency. And the image that came to mind, a pastor friend of mine introduced me to it. So it's picturing a house, all the lights on, all the windows and doors are wide open. Right? Nothing hidden, nothing concealed. Everything is completely out there in the open.

Now, does that take some bravery, to be honest, initially and in an ongoing way? Yeah.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But the bravery is not rooted in me. It's not rooted in my valiance. It's rooted in the fact that there's a promise that when I walk in the light He is faithful, we will have fellowship with one another, fellowship with God, fellowship with you, and I'll be cleansed of that unrighteousness.

So the kind of thing that we think about is, you know, a sexual lust, pornography, addiction, things like that. But there's so many other areas that depending on wherever your shame is, that there's an opportunity to turn from it, to step out in faith and walk honestly.

Selena: Yes, it's a real opportunity to lock that gate. I think we need to understand too that temptation is not sin. Right?

Ryan: Jesus was tempted and He was without sin.

Selena: So when you're dealing with temptation, you need to be honest and transparent with your spouse. And I think that being honest about that struggle, and then taking that next step of okay, how can we overcome this together? How does the Lord want us to proceed in this area? Usually, it's by bringing others in and having others come around you that maybe are more experienced or whatnot.

But it begins with that open communication of "Hey, I'm struggling, or I've been struggling..." Being open about the sin that you've allowed to fester in your life.

Ryan: Yeah, that's good. Actually, that goes to the second point. So committing to honesty. That's the first gate. Let's lock that one down, in that we're going to be honest with one another.

The second one is checking in often. That sounds super obvious. But here's what we mean. And we're going to be really clear because, you know, a lot of couples will live in close proximity to one another with very little intimacy. They'll live in the same house, but they won't live in the same headspace, they won't live in the same heart space.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And they're not actually asking questions that are incisive or probing into the depths of the human heart and the depths of the human mind and checking in. Truly checking in is not just, "How's your day?" "Okay good."

Selena: Well, it's also not permission to just be naggy and policing your spouse as well. Right? [00:10:00] It's if you care about their heart, then you're actually checking in because you care and you want to know.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. It's even the switch of a tone of voice. There's times when I say to you, like, "How are you doing? What's going on in your head."

Selena: That always gets me and I'm like, "Oh, finally, he's asked, I can tell him all the things." Just a waterfall of emotions

Ryan: What I mean is, "What's going on in that head of yours and in that heart of yours? Tell me. Help me."

Selena: And you know when your spouse is struggling with something. You know when something's on their heart. And you don't have to be afraid of what it will be. God is with us.

Ryan: And the communication is the way that we get access, because like you could spend your whole life... Like, think about this analogy. Say you live in New York City... Tim Keller actually shared this example. This lesson, I should say.

You're in New York City, you could spend every day commuting on the same train with that person. And you could say in a sense that you kind of know that person. That you've seen them, they carry a certain brand of laptop, they have a certain, they have certain earbuds and they have an iPhone or an Android, they wear a certain type of clothes, or they're headed to a certain part of town. Like you know something about that person.

But you would never say, "I know them." The only time you can get to say you know them is when you've had a conversation with them. Because then

everything you think you know is either confirmed or denied. Because then you actually can say, "I know this factually about that person."

It's the same thing with our spouse. But we have to be mature enough, diligent enough to check in often enough, but go deep enough in those check-ins. So if you know that your spouse has a certain propensity to struggle in one area or another, it's up to you in some ways to find a way to ask them about that in a way that's disarming. And of course, they need to be honest to you in return. Of course, we talked about that first.

So commit to honesty. Again, we're talking about how to affair-proof your marriage, to lock down the gates. The first gate we're locking down is we're going to be honest. The second one is we're going to check in. We're not going to be passive participants in each other's lives, we're going to be active and asking difficult questions. And then the second... the third one, excuse me.

Selena: The third one is to get accountable to godly people. So this is the community piece - what we kind of mentioned at the beginning. When you're struggling with sin, or whatever is coming, temptation is coming in, you know, Proverbs 27:17, is that as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

We can't gloss over the importance of community around us, godly Christian community that believes the Bible, that wants to bring you back to the Lord, that is willing to long suffer with you and to be there with you through some of these hard times of rebuilding trust. We can't just do it on our own.

And our shame would keep us there. Our shame would keep us doing it on our own in the dark without anyone's help. But God's called us, like you said, into the light. He's called us to live in the light. Whatever the sin, whatever the shame, come into the light, meet the Savior, let His blood wash over you.

Ryan: And I think there's a reason we're called to confess our sins to one another. Not just to God, but to one another. And so if you're sitting here listening to this, watching this thinking, "Well, I can't say that. I can't confess what I really dealing with my friends because they would stop being my friends."

And I'm saying, if these friends are calling themselves Christians, they need to learn a lesson about what it means to be a Christian friend. That confessing our sin to one another, it's not a one way thing, it's a two way street.

And so we don't have time to get into it here, but there is a categorical difference between a friend who you have who is a Christian and somebody you would call a Christian friend. And what I briefly mean by that *is [Selena chuckles]* there is a functional role that a Christian friend will play in your life.

They're asking you deeper questions and more committed, as opposed to somebody who is a friend who just happens to be Christian.

We get into that in greater detail in our book called Fierce Marriage. I didn't mean to pitch our books today. *[both chuckles]* But there's a really distinct role to be played in your life. And I just want to encourage you not to let that Christian friend slot be filled by someone who's not actually being a Christian friend unto you. So maybe we'll talk about that at greater length in later video. Okay, so community around you.

The fourth one is... this one take it with a grain of salt. There's a lot of nuance here we won't be able to get into. But actively improve your sex life. That's the fourth one. So what do we mean by that? It's really easy. Okay, we're going on 19 years married. It's really easy just to get into kind of cruising altitude, status quo, time to do the thing so let's do the thing. And it ends up being the thing but not a whole lot of - what's the word? *[unintelligible 00:14:50]* *[both laughs]*

Selena: I would never have guessed that word.

Ryan: Or fireworks. I think there's always fireworks. Maybe they're more colorful sometimes. *[00:15:00]*

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: But here's the beauty of that you and your spouse alone are the ones who get to decide what improving looks like in your marriage. Okay? You don't have to go to an outside authority. You don't have to consult any books. You don't have to consult even us.

All we need to do is look each other in the eye and say, "Hey, our sex life is one way, could it be better? Can we improve it? How would you like to improve our sex life?" And your spouse will hopefully ask you the same question and you would have honest responses that are communicated in love.

Selena: I think from there, though, you can get some books. I don't want to say like you have to go figure it out on your own, because there are some really good books. One that we've read or we interviewed and endorsed it, all the things, by Gary Thomas and Deborah Fileta. But it's called-

Ryan: Married Sex.

Selena: Married Sex, right?

Ryan: Married sex, yeah.

Selena: Okay. And it's from a Christian biblical worldview. And I think it challenged us we're reading and we're like, "Woo, it getting little warm in here." And I think it's a good refresher. It's a good way to not just smooth sail.

Ryan: A caveat to all that is making sure that it is actually rooted in Scripture. It's not rooted in pop psychology or some sort of worldly ideology, but it's all standing on the foundation and the truth of Scripture.

Selena: Well, and I think not to say either that just because you're having lots of sex doesn't necessarily... it's not the only factor. So not to put too much weight in this.

Ryan: That's why there's more than one factor.

Selena: Right. I just want to make sure that we're being heard correctly.

Ryan: And please do take all this with a grain of salt because we can't have a conversation with you. We can't possibly speak to every nuance situation, every reason why, you know, you're struggling in this area. But it's all couched in the conversation of how to affair-proof your marriage.

And it's not saying... here's what we're not saying: You need to do X, Y, and Z in your sex life as often as A, B, and C. We're not saying that. We're saying that just actively improve it. We could say the same thing about your communication. We could say the same thing about how you steward your finances, and how you, you know, deal with the tasks of the household. Like actively improve it. Think about it.

Because sex is one of the things culture tends to lead us to think that if it's not awesome on its own it's never going to be awesome. And that's a lie. It's a skill. We get to know one another, we get to know what each other likes, and how to, you know, kind of... I don't know how to say it. How to flip the switches and turn the knob. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: I'll leave it to that.

Selena: Number five.

Ryan: Number five. Correct. Recalibrate your standard of beauty. What I mean by that is, okay, so a lot of times when affairs happen, it's because one spouse is looking elsewhere for what they should only find in their husband or their wife. And so there's some level of entitlement, some level of unsatisfied dissatisfaction. And so they start thinking, "Well, if only she looked or acted or said the things that this-

Selena: Or she says, "He really understands me," I feel like, or "He really hears what I'm saying," or "He always treats me really nicely. And my husband doesn't?" It's the kind of things I think we start entertaining.

Ryan: So that's a little different because your husband should treat you nicely, right? Maybe he treats you nicely, but just not in this new way that you're finding attractive because it's novel. And it's-

Selena: Off-limits most likely.

Ryan: It's off-limits and there's this kind of... Yeah. So what we mean by this one is learn to find satisfaction in the spouse that you have. And so, learn to find your husband, your wife, attractive, right? It doesn't mean they're perfect. It just means that they're yours. Therefore, they are attractive to you in a way that only they can be attractive only to you. Does that make sense?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So we have to learn to be disciplined and not looking from the left to the right, but just being thankful, grateful, content with the spouse that God has given us. Because if you're married to them, that's your soulmate. That's awesome.

And then if you're struggling with that, I guess I would encourage you to ask the Lord to show you what that means, ask the Lord to open your heart to what that might look like.

Selena: So quick recap on six ways to affair-proof your marriage. The first one is commit to honesty. Commit to honest and open communication. The second one is to check in often. Having that heart orientation, being one of care and love and not just policing the nagging.

Get accountable to godly Christian men and women, which is the third. Fourth one, actively improve your sex life. And the fifth one, recalibrate your standard of beauty. And the very last one we're going to say is fight with Christ, which kind of sounds like fight against Christ, but it's not. Fight with Christ.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: He is fighting for your marriage.

Ryan: It's funny [00:20:00] this one is at the end. But it's also kind of at the beginning because we talked about the whole reason and basis for honesty is the fact that I am loved in Christ and I am called to righteousness as a means by which I live out the reality of being loved by Christ.

And so this just takes that to the next level, says, "Okay, that's welling up from within me now. Don't just try and go and run the gauntlet on your own to affair-proof, to lock down your marriage. But as you go through your marriage, fight alongside Christ. Because you gotta remember Christ is for your union. He said in Mark, "What the Lord has brought together, let men not separate." He is going to reinforce the covenant that you've made and He's going to fight alongside you.

Here's the thing is He's not just a back pocket kind of nice to have. He is leading the charge in that fight. We are following Him. He's not just tagging along. We are tagging along with Him to fight for righteousness, to fight for purity and wholeness in our marriage.

And so fight with Christ, as an individual, as a couple. Get on the same page with Christ and what His vision for covenant is, His vision for love is, so on and so forth.

Selena: And if your spouse is away from Christ, if one of you has just given up, if the other one has not, pray, pray, pray, pray for each other. Pray for your own hearts, pray for your own marriage, that God would soften your hearts, that God would reconcile you.

Prayer is powerful. We have seen it on many occasions when trust has been broken through affairs, or there's been temptation and there's been some hurt. So prayer. It is a gift from God. It is one way we can know Him and know His will for our lives as well in hard situations.

Ryan: If you're looking for a way to grow tangibly in the areas that we've discussed here, especially when it comes to routing your very fabric of your marriage and the things of God, we have a course for you. We're going to push everything in this episode apparently.

Selena: All the things. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: We have a six-week marriage core course, and it's part of our online learning platform called Gospel Centered Marriage. So when you sign up for Gospel

Centered Marriage, you are encouraged to take the six-week course first. And that's the foundational piece. And that gets you toward oneness. Anyway, that's there for you.

And we built that as a need to be a refresher. We built it to be for newlyweds, for couples who are just coming to the faith who don't know the first thing about covenant to love and marriage. So to find out more, just go to gospelcentredmarriage.com. All the details are there. We actually do cohorts. We did our first cohort this last January.

Selena: There's one coming up

Ryan: It's been unbelievable. We had over 60 couples on this Zoom call. Many more couples signed up. It was awesome. It was awesome. And people are growing. We're already seeing the stories rolling in. I'm so encouraged to how people are finding oneness by focusing and growing in Christ.

So if you want to be part of that, just go to gospelcentredmarriage.com. Anytime you sign up, you can be part of the next cohort. We do about every two months, every two or three months. So we'd love to see you in there.

With that said, hopefully that was helpful. Six ways to affair-proof your marriage. Why don't we pray and then we call it an episode? You want to pray for us?

Selena: God, thank you so much for your word, for giving us instruction and modeling what living in the light is for transparency, for fearlessness. We don't have to be afraid of whatever we have to face, whether it be temptation or rebuilding trust.

God, you have helped us overcome these things. We walk in your light. God, I pray for all the marriages that are dealing with broken trust and potential affairs or affairs that have happened. God, that you would be their strength, you would bring them back, reconcile them, renew their marriage. Lord, we come before you humbly asking for your continued blessing, your continued redemption in our lives every day. In your name, amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right, folks, thank you so much for joining us. This has been a joy. Hopefully, it's been helpful to you. But this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: We'll see you again in about seven days. So until then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:03:34]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - 1 John 4:18

- **[00:06:28]**
 - Recommended Resource:
 - [See Through Marriage](#)

- **[00:12:24]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Proverbs 27:17

- **[00:14:00]**
 - Recommended Resource:
 - [Fierce Marriage](#)
 - [Married Sex](#)
 - [Gospel Centered Marriage](#)

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