

HOW DO WE HANDLE ANGER IN MARRIAGE?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/how-do-we-handle-anger-in-marriage>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: So we have this ongoing kind of joke in our marriage that there is a third person at times by the name of the Hawk that will make appearances- *[laughs]*

Selena: How dare you?

Ryan: Didn't see that coming?

Selena: No. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Selena you've self-identified as a Hawk at times. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Stop it. Don't use those words.

Ryan: No, sometimes you feel like, you know, there's something about anger that is blinding, right? It blinds us to the people around us, it blinds us to the counsel of others, it blinds us to the counsel of God, it blinds us to the Holy Spirit within us. Because anger, in many cases, it's fast, it burns hot, it's decisive in not very good ways. So today we're kind of *[Selena laughs]* addressing the Hawk in the room.

Selena: Not just me.

Ryan: 900-pound gorilla.

Selena: Everybody's got a hawk I'm sure.

Ryan: Everybody has one.

Selena: It just comes out differently for others, because not all anger comes out in the same way.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. So we're gonna cover that today and give you some ways to think about and categorize and talk about anger as a dynamic in your marriage, anger in your heart. Where does that come from? How do we deal with that? And-

Selena: Is it sinful to be angry?

Ryan: Is it a sin to be angry? Right? So we're gonna unpack all that here today on Fierce Marriage and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:20] <music>

Selena: All right, if you're just joining us, I am Selena Frederick. This is my husband.

Ryan: I'm Ryan. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: And we are the voices and people behind all things Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting, the Frederick's Fierce Families. If it's fierce, it's probably us.

Ryan: Yes!

Selena: And if it's not, it should be. Just kidding. *[both laughs]* Okay. We're talking about anger today. But before we get started, a little bit of how you can help us before we help you. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Well, if this has been helpful to you, we would really be honored if you would leave a rating and review if you're listening on the podcast. If you're watching this on YouTube, go ahead and subscribe. If we've earned it, we hope that we've earned it this far, we hope to earn it in the future, if we haven't yet. Leave a comment if you have a question.

If you want to partner with us, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. That is one of the primary ways that we are able to sustain this ministry. Yeah, we sell books. Yeah, we have online courses. But I will tell you that the margins on books are pretty thin, if at all, and courses are just one of those things... Like it's another thing for people to get on board with. Right? And it's kind of a hard sell at times. So thank you if you're considering partnering with us. We really appreciate that.

All right. So, anger today.

Selena: Anger.

Ryan: Anger. I'm stricken by this idea of anger because you asked this question: is it a sin? Is it automatically a sin to be mad, to be angry? If your children are disobeying you or if your wife is disobeying you? *[laughs]* No words. *[Selena chuckles]* No words, yes. Very obedient.

Selena: No kinder words. *[both laughs]* All right, we're turning this over. I'm usurping his submission on this video.

- Ryan:** You're usurping my submission.
- Selena:** Or your position.
- Ryan:** My position. No, I'm joking. If your wife is just being malfeasance, which is much more- *[laughs]*
- Selena:** He keeps laughing and moving away-
- Ryan:** Because I know what this is.
- Selena:** ...because he knows there's no truth in that.
- Ryan:** There's safety when the camera's turned on. I'm safe here. *[both laughs]* Sorry. What were we saying? Is it okay to be angry even when you might be justified in that anger? We've kind of uncovered and through some study found different types of anger. There's maybe a spectrum of anger, if you will, from maybe anger that's okay, maybe the anger that's justified and in some way righteous, in many ways righteous, and then all the way down to the anger that just destroys—it will destroy us.
- Selena:** That will be the hawk section, I believe. *[chuckles]* So let's go to James 1. We're going to start in verses 2 through 5. And the reason why we're starting with the Bible is because it instructs us, it calibrates us, it gives us perspective on what we might be dealing with. So James 1 starting in verses 2 through 5, but we're going to focus on 19 and 20. We're not going to read all the way through even though we love the Bible. And you should too. You should read the whole book of James.
- Verse 2, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." See, you can have wisdom.
- Ryan:** I'm asking God for wisdom right now-
- Selena:** Oh, good.
- Ryan:** ...how to handle you. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: Verses 19 and 20, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

That's telling us that there. There is an anger inside of us that does not produce good things. But then when the Bible says "righteous anger," what does that mean? Can I be angry? I mean, Jesus was angry, right? He got angry. He displayed anger, but He was without sin. So how do we kind of take all these pieces apart and understand them in a way that helps us communicate and live in unity more without... and not allowing anger to kind of rule the day?

Ryan: Well, I mean, wrath is something that God exercises in His perfect holiness, in His perfect righteousness. Here's the horrible news and the really good news is that without help, without intervention, we are subjects of the wrath of God in we deserve to bear the wrath of God, and rightfully so. It's not something that He's being unfair, He's being unloving. No. Rightfully because He's so holy and we have rebelled against Him. But Christ, but Jesus has stepped in and said, "I will bear the wrath of God on their behalf, and then I will impute upon them My own righteousness," so that we are no longer objects of wrath, but we are objects of affection. Not objects, but we are people brought into the graces of God.

So to answer your question, God still has wrath and He still will express anger in ways that He's justified in doing. I'm not going to tell God what He can do, but I'm just observing something about who God is. So to define righteous anger as humans, this comes all the way down to the Imago Dei, meaning that we are made in God's image. We are image-bearers. Very dimly in a shadowy sort of way, in some cases, we reflect the very character of God. So we can love, we have the capacity to love, we have the capacity to create, not ex nihilo, not from nothing. But we can maybe even create a pretty drawing or we can write things, we can bring ideas to life. That's part of the image of God. Well, as part of that we have the option of being angry.

Now, righteous anger is being angry at something because it's an affront and in rebellion to God's righteousness, to God's law, to God's way. Pornography, right? Pornography makes me so angry, because it is an affront to the right design of God and the holiness that He calls us to as people, to live within His design for sex. But it's a complete and utter distortion of that.

Not only that. It exploits women, you can make the case that it exploits men, it damages relationships, it damages these people physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. It is a nuclear warhead that is going off in our country on a second by second bases, in our world on a second by second basis. That makes me very angry, and I want to burn those servers to the

ground, the ones that, you know, the websites they are using. And I think there's a righteousness to that.

Selena: Absolutely. I think the gray part comes when we feel angry towards our spouse. So let's find an example in marriage as well. I mean, pornography does affect marriages, obviously. But when we're angry towards each other, how do we differentiate between what's righteous anger? Because I feel like maybe, for an example, if you lied to me and there was a lack of truth there, then I have a right to be angry. But what I do with that, I think, really can lead to obedience or disobedience right to God's word and to really live that out.

When we look at the model of Jesus, and when He was angry, like in the temple, there's just a few facts that were shown when He was displaying this anger. And this is on gotquestions.com. Was Jesus ever angry? That's kind of the article. And they always lay everything out very well.

Ryan: .org.

Selena: .org. Sorry. Got questions.org. So Jesus' anger had the proper motivation. His anger had the proper focus. You know, we could go through all of these. It didn't arise out of a petty argument, right? So in this example, if you have lied to me, that's a proper motivation for me to be angry because there's dishonesty and truth that is... and deeper layers of seeds that we don't want to grow in our marriage.

Ryan: Well, and you could even make the argument that if you aren't angry in that case, is there really love? Is there really a sense of grieving, a brokenness in our communion as husband and wife? If a wife finds out that her husband is sleeping around and she just like, "Oh, well..." there's something really wrong, off, about her love for her husband. Who knows what the reasons are for that! Maybe he's pulled away from her for many years and she's embittered. That's all history that we can't...

But the point is, is it will be supplemented by something. That's one of the points that they say here. That Jesus' anger was supplemented by his grief because he's seeing the affront that it is to the holiness of God.

Selena: His anger had proper control and proper duration. So He didn't allow His anger to turn into bitterness. He didn't hold a grudge. He wasn't holding it over. So, again, this example of saying He's been dishonest to me, I'm not going to, you know, by God's grace, hold it over him. But if it's a continual habit and a continual way in our marriage, then it's going to be hard to not turn bitter, right?

So the anger can grow and grow. But ideally, like when we see Jesus and we see Him getting angry in the temple, we see that He had a proper duration. He dealt with each situation properly. He handled anger in a good time. And that would be I think, the thing that we strive for as believers in a marriage—dealing with anger when one of us causes the other to get angry or we just get angry because you have made me angry. *[both chuckles]* I become angry about something that he's done right or something.

Ryan: I forget the verse, but it say like the blessings of the Lord go from generation to generation, though the curse from the Lord is only like for this generation. Something to that effect where God's anger is not eternal expiration date in many cases. Now, the character of His wrath and the character we talked about earlier is always going to be at odds with sinning. He's not going to stop like being... He's not going to one day start being okay with just we sinned against His law, His goodness, His design.

Selena: He holds it in higher regard than we do often times, right?

Ryan: Absolutely.

Selena: So there's a few more we can go through. But I think it's just important that we, as a couple, take a moment to sit and recognize, like, what does anger look like in your marriage? I think for me, I get really... I have this justice-oriented attitude, and I want justice in the situation, I want fairness. You start to feel angry when you feel a lack of respect, when you feel that I'm being unloving, or I'm making these generalizations. He loves when I say "always" and "never." *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I always love when you say "always" and "never."

Selena: He always loves when I say those things. *[both chuckles]* But it stems from this heart condition that we all have of sin. And that God is constantly... He's sanctifying us right within the struggle of dealing with anger. I mean, one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control. And again, anger is not a sin. It's what we do when we're angry that can cause us to sin.

Ryan: The thing that's interesting to me is we're like... listen to what we're saying here. So it's right and good and true for you to feel loved by me, to feel like I'm understanding you well. That's right and good and true. And when you lack those things from me, something wells up within you—that righteous anger. "He's not giving me what he should be giving me as a wife." Or you talked about me wanting respect. Like it's right and good for a wife to respect her husband in a healthy way. And to not give it, you could make the argument that it's sinful.

Selena: Even if he's not respect-

Ryan: Don't go there.

Selena: Okay, stay here.

Ryan: Husbands, be respectable. Follow the Lord, love your wife. Like I'm saying all those things. Not every man does those things. So you can make the argument that he doesn't deserve respect. Okay, that's a whole nother episode altogether. But the point is, is when you feel wrong, there's a moral judgment being made. You're not giving me what I deserve. You are a bad person. Therefore, I am okay and I am justified in being angry towards you, even if—and we don't often detect this—even when that anger has transitioned now into sin territory because now I'm holding it against you in a way that God has not held my sin against me. And I'm forgetting that I'm saved by the same blood on the same cross by the same savior. The same grace that it provided.

There's something in the human mind, okay? When we are righteously angry, there's... I forget the exact place that it stimulates or what the areas of the brain that light up. But it's like the same place that lights up when you're experiencing great satisfaction or great pleasure. It's the same brain space that says, "I am righteously angry right now." It feels similar.

Selena: Full of emotion and full of-

Ryan: Full of satisfaction. Like I feel justified in this and I need to get what I-

Selena: You start stewing and you're boiling.

Ryan: I mean, how many times have you gone away and you're thinking about how mad you are at your spouse because of all the things that she hasn't done or that she said... And you're just building this case in your head and feeling totally justified the whole time. And then you get home and it's like time to fight. And then what I realized is that as soon as you bring her into the equation, she starts actually like poking holes in my whole thing that I've been building in my head and it all comes crashing.

Selena: It all comes crumbling down. It's usually that way for both of us.

Ryan: So it does stem from a heart condition.

Selena: It does. It does.

Ryan: There's something in there that wants justice as we start to feel satisfied in that. So we as a society struggle in knowing how to deal with anger because part of us wants it resolved quickly and at whatever cost. What do you mean by that?

Selena: So I think oftentimes we don't necessarily want to take the time or walk the path and get on the journey that it's going to take to really understand our anger and to understand the root of where it comes from, which more importantly it's coming from our sin nature, but it's coming... The Bible gives us instruction. The Bible tells us how to deal with this anger. But oftentimes, we just want to, okay, yeah, I'm sorry, whatever. Let's move on. We're so quick to just get to the other side of it. We don't actually want to deal with it.

And I think that we miss a valuable opportunity for God to really grow us and sanctify us as an individual and as a single soul, but also within our marriage and how... If I'm dealing with anger on a regular basis, which out of the two of us I think I definitely deal with anger more than you do.

Ryan: It's funny.

Selena: Outwardly maybe. *[chuckles]* I don't know if that's accurate. Because you get angry, but it takes a lot for you to get angry.

Ryan: Okay, it's funny because we talked about... This is gonna sound weird, but we talk about a sex drive being... Like for a guy, it's like a sports car from A to B as fast as possible. Like, that's fine. Turn on the engine, turn it off, you're done.

For a lady, it's more like a freight train. It takes a long time to warm up but it carries a massive kind of payload, if you will. It carry a lot of weight and it takes a long time to slow down. I think the opposite is true for our anger dynamic in that you can get really mad really quickly but then you're over it.

Selena: I'm over it. Yeah.

Ryan: And you're ready to move on. And I'm just like, I can't let it go. And I have to really resign myself because I'll be slow to anger but I'm also slow to not be an angry.

Selena: Yes, yes.

Ryan: And so that can result in, sorry to say, like days of anger.

Selena: We've experienced kind of that cut off from each other. Because anger definitely divides you, right? There's this wall of anger now. He's stewing, I'm over here, I'm great. Why are you still angry about that thing...?

Ryan: And I'm like, "What? Of course I'm angry."

Selena: It makes him even more angry because of the fact that I don't carry the same weight in some of those things. I'm not saying that's a good thing. I'm not saying that like, hey, I'm resilient.

Ryan: We're exposing some of our sin here,-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...some areas where we've had to really work through. And in those moments when I'm not walking in forgiveness, now, part of that is because there hasn't been reconciliation, there hasn't been repentance, there hasn't been communication around it. So, you know, some of that is more logistical than anything. We don't have the bandwidth because of the kids and life and everything else.

Selena: And believer, if you are married, it's your responsibility to not just wait until the other one comes around, right? We need to take on the responsibility of when we're angry, when there's a sever in our relationship, in our unity. We need to be asking the Lord to soften our hearts. I want to say we need to fight faster. We need to come quicker to the table with an apology, with owning things, and not just saying that you're always the one taking on the blame.

But truly look at the situation and own your part in it and understand that your anger plays a role and it hurts people. It can destroy things. It can destroy the unity of your relationship, the life of your relationship. I mean, the way Jesus talks about anger—I think it's in Luke... No, it was in Matthew—it's as if you're killing someone, right? It's the anger... Tell me. Explain a little bit more because I'm a little bit...

Ryan: I mean, like lusting after someone is the same as committing adultery; anger in your heart is the same as if you've murdered that person.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And that's what Jesus is making that... He's making a case for sin wells up from the heart. It's not just the actions-

Selena: It's not what you did to me.

Ryan: It's our heart orientation toward one another and toward God Himself.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: I mean, I love that James verse. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. That assumes that we want the righteousness of God. So fierce couple, if you're watching this, listening to this, you're thinking, "Okay, I want a healthy marriage. I want to get along with my spouse. I want to experience closeness and connection. I want to be happy with them."

Let's add something to that list. We should want the righteousness of God. We should want the righteousness of God to be produced in us. We should want it to be produced in one another. We should want it to be produced out of our marriage. And so if we look at our anger and we actually internalize that truth, that it does not produce the righteousness of God, that tells us that, okay, if I really want this, then I can turn from this because the thing that I want will only happen if I entrust this into God's hands and I entrust my response and my obedient response into his care.

Selena: And I think I can speak to this just for a quick second. I have a personal struggle with kids and just being a mom of three. And just, I think, have seen anger in my family growing up, my family of origin, and how it was expressed or not expressed. So those are kind of my tendencies to burst out or throw a fit or something like that.

So I just hate the cycle so much. I hate that I'm constantly blowing up, going back to my kids and repenting, blowing up repenting to my children. I am all for repenting, I just don't want to keep destroying this relationship and blowing up. So I got a book, and we'll put it in the show notes. This book is called *A Small Book about a Big Problem* by Edward T. Welch. *Meditations on Anger, Patience, and Peace*.

And I think someone recommended it to me, and it has really deepened my understanding about the effects of anger and how it really can destroy people, and how I don't want to destroy that relationship with my children.

So by trusting God's word, trusting that even in those moments where I want to just flare up and get so angry and yell, I don't have to. The Holy Spirit has given me freedom to not have to be enslaved to those emotions. I can choose to take a timeout. What did they say? Three seconds is the difference between a response and-

Ryan: A reaction.

- Selena:** ...a reaction and-
- Ryan:** Reaction is a bad thing. It's like the knee-jerk reaction. Response is, how am I gonna respond to this?
- Selena:** Right. They say it's like a three-second difference. So I can have tools to help me but the deeper truth is that I need to trust God's word. And when he says I'm exercising self-control, that means the Holy Spirit is at work in me, and he's developing fruit in me, and I need to embrace that above what I'm feeling in that fiery moment of, "Let's fight. I'm right, you're wrong. I win." Right?
- Ryan:** Yeah. Interesting. So we mentioned a spectrum of anger early on. We've talked about righteous anger and how it is possible to have righteous anger, to be angry without sinning. I mean, that's why the book of James say, "In your anger, do not sin."
- Selena:** Yeah, do not sin.
- Ryan:** Do not sin in that anger. It doesn't mean don't be angry. Just in the anger do not sin. And it's possible to be angry. Because if you're wronged against, that's going to create some angry response. Now, it's my job to not sin in how I respond to your anger. And this is the other part of the spectrum. So you've got righteous anger, then we've got hot anger, which is the anger that wants to lash out and wants to be... *[Selena chuckles]* It wants to go out and seek justice and it wants to make wrong things right as far as I see it.
- Selena:** And throw it in people's faces and tell them how... how could you even think that this was something that, you know...?
- Ryan:** Well, that's kind of the, you know, you see red... It's like road rage.
- Selena:** I see white. I see nothing clearly.
- Ryan:** That's like the road rage anger when it's like you stop seeing all, you know-
- Selena:** Anything rightly.
- Ryan:** ...all logic, all reason, and all you care about is just satisfying that anger. That's hot anger. The other side of that is cold anger. And that's what you see in couples where they've let the hot anger cool down without dealing with it.
- Selena:** Without reconciliation.

Ryan: And it turns into bitterness. And it turns into distance. And it turns into shutting one another out. It turns into a communication cold snap, which we've talked about that at length—how to break those communication cold snaps. It's apathy. And it's self-righteous, justified apathy. I'm not going to give you affection because you've totally ignored me.

I'm not going to meet you midway because I'm just done. Like I'm done with the relationship. I'm done with you. I'm done with... You just giving up. Right? And the question is, which one of those is worse? Both. Both are worse. *[both laughs]*

Selena: The answer is yes, and both.

Ryan: Both, yeah. So we can sin in both of those things because we're not called to... We're called to love each other. We're called to be long-suffering. We're called to be patient and kind, and engaging with one another and seeking out one another and seeking to produce that fruit of righteousness because you're in a Christian marriage. Your spouse is not just a roommate. She's not just even your wife. She's your sister in Christ. And it is our duty as brother and sister in Christ, husband and wife to be fighting the good fight of faith, producing the righteousness of God in one another, and pursuing one another on to the health of our marriage and to the glory of God. So righteous anger, hot anger, cold anger.

Selena: I'm gonna read a quote from that book that I commented on earlier by Edward T. Welch. So dealing with anger, it starts with this. "When you are fully confident that your father is just, you know that injustice will not prosper. You have not become angry when offenses are committed against you because you will leave it in his hands."

Ryan: You will leave it in His hands. I'm going to read this verse here. It's Ephesians 4:31-32. It says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Do you notice the progression there? It says, "Let all bitterness, wrath, and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you."

There's a number of things to be observed there. Let it be put away from you. It's a passive way to phrase that. Maybe another translation, I'm not sure what translation that is, but maybe another translation might have said, "Put it away from yourself." That would have been the middle voice or more active voice. But it's not that. It's passive. Let it be put away from you, along with all malice.

That tells me that it's the work of the Holy Spirit in me. It's the work of God in me saying, I'm going to refuse this path and said, I'm gonna let it be put away from me. And instead, I'm gonna do the opposite. I'm gonna be kind, tender-hearted. What does Paul say? Forgiving one another. And then he... this is like the mic drop. He says, "As God in Christ forgave you.

Without that grounding realization that God in Christ forgave me, He is the arbiter of justice, He is the arbiter of right and wrong, and He has forgiven me my immense offense against Him. Now, I can trust Him to be the arbiter of this right and wrong. I can trust Him to be the arbiter of our injustice and this frustration, this anger that's welling up within me. That's where it begins.

Selena: Right. Just a few things I think that can help. Some tools maybe. Again, we talked about how the difference between a reaction and response is about three seconds. You can feel your body, like know your body. When you're starting to get heated and you know your heartbeat is starting to race, your eyes are starting to bulge, the hawk is coming out, pause. Take a timeout-

Ryan: Veins are popping out of your head.

Selena: Take a timeout and pause. Take three seconds, maybe even take five seconds, say, "I'm getting really emotional, I'm really angry right now-

Ryan: Took two hours if you need it.

Selena: "We need to stop and have a timeout because I'm not seeing clearly right now. I want to hear what you're saying but right now I can't hear what you're saying." *[chuckles]* So be okay with taking a timeout.

Ryan: There's an earnestness in there too, because I can see... And I've done this. Like you can say that and throw it in their face in a way. Like, "I don't get you right now, so I'm out."

Selena: Right. Oh, no, no. The timeout is we're-

Ryan: There's an earnestness that says like, "I really want to make sure we get this right but I can't. And I don't think you can either. I love you. Let's take a break." You can still say I love you when you're married... when you're angry by the way. You can still say I love you when you're married... angry. Dang it! *[both laughs]* You can still say I love you when you're angry with one another. And it still means that you love them. It just means that you have chosen love in that moment over self-righteousness.

Selena: It's super reassuring. So, take some deep breaths. Know your body. Know your just physical responses. Take three seconds, one with [inaudible 00:28:20] or three hours. The important thing about that is to say we are going to reconcile this and there is a reconciliation point. And just get those go-tos and help... Don't do this alone. I think that would be the biggest one is if you need help, like seek help.

Sometimes our anger and emotions feels like it's something outside of us and we can't seem to grab a hold of it no matter how hard we try. The Holy Spirit can absolutely change hearts. I think sometimes we feel like we're at a dead-end, and we need some help. We need a book, we need a counselor, we need a friend to pray with us. Those are tools. God has given us those gifts and blessings.

Ryan: I have an illustration story real fast to end this episode with. We had a really bad fight a number of years back. And by a fight I mean we were just arguing. It was one of those ones where you're like telling the kids to go in their room because you don't want them to hear you firsthand. Rather they hear you through a door. Right? Because they're gonna hear you anyway. But it wasn't getting any cool. Like, we weren't cooling off at all. I was getting more worked up. You were cooking dinner. We hadn't had dinner yet as a family and I said, "You know what? I can't. I can't. I just need to go. I'm gonna come back but I need to vacate the premises." So I went.

I ended up at this downtown Tacoma. The area where we live there is this distillery because I'm interested in distilleries. Don't judge me. But the point is-

Selena: Don't read into it. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Don't read into it. I just love the science of it. Anyway. This distillery was there. It was down in this old basement and they happened to be open. And I went down and no one was there, and I'm like, it's empty. They got the steel running off in the corner. And I'm just like, "Hello, anyone here?" And this guy, this old chap, Andy, comes out and he goes, "Hey, welcome. You're hungry? And out of the blue, he's like, "You hungry?" I said, "As a matter of fact, I am hungry," because I had just left my house, my wife was making dinner and hadn't eaten yet.

And he goes, "Yeah, we have some elk chili. I just shot an elk last week. *[Selena laughs]* I made some elk chili. There's extra. You can have some." And I sit down and I'm having elk chili with these two guys, these veterans. They were army vets. And I got to talk to them, and lo and behold, Andy's a believer. And I start spilling my guts. "I'm actually here because my wife and I are having an

argument. I'm a marriage guy, I'm supposed to know this stuff." We're laughing, and he's like, "Yeah, well, sometimes taking a breath is the right thing to do."

So I just hung out with these guys for probably an hour, ate dinner. Yuk it up a little bit, talking. And came home. I remember coming home, the dinner had been eaten-

Selena: Kids were in bed I think.

Ryan: I walked through the door, kids were in bed. I forget what I said but I was like, "Selena, I can't remember why we were fighting but I just want to be done with it. Can I just give you a hug?" Something to that effect?" And that was the extent of that resolution? Because at the end of the day, I think it was a silly fight. There was a misunderstanding. I had gotten my feelings hurt, you were frustrated and angry. *[laughs]*

Selena: I was right.

Ryan: We don't even remember what the fight was.

Selena: It hurts his feelings when I'm right. Just kidding. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: The point is, sometimes you need to just take a moment, many moments, but always with that earnest desire and promise to say like, "Yeah, I need to take a step back but I'm coming back.

Selena: You're taking a step back to come back not just to step away.

Ryan: Yeah, it's not an abandonment of the fight. It's say, "Let's do this right. And right now I know that I am not walking with spirit, I'm walking in my flesh." That resulted in a stronger union for us. And boy, will I tell you, when you make up after a tough fight, marital rights are a wonderful thing. So that's one of the upsides of tough arguments, and making up the right way.

So let's pray. Lord, I thank you for Your grace over our lives, over the anger that we've expressed sinfully, for the anger that we've tried to take upon ourselves to find justice. Lord, please forgive us of that. Thank you for forgiving us of that. I pray that You would help us to entrust our angry emotions into Your loving hands. Trust Your brand of justice on our own.

I pray for the couples, the husbands, the wives watching this, listening to this that they would be aware of their own propensity to be angry and find their own incorrect ways of handling that anger and that they might repent of that

sin, turn from it, turn towards you, and turn toward one another in their marriage, to love one another better, and to urge one another into righteousness. Lord, in Your precious name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. This episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:04:04]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - James 1:2-5

- **[00:20:48]**
 - Recommended resource:
 - [*A Small Book about a Big Problem: Meditations on Anger, Patience, and Peace*](#) by Edward T. Welch
 -

- **[00:01:50]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Ephesians 4:31-32

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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