

A FEW TOOLS FOR TRANSPARENCY

<https://fiercemarriage.com/a-few-tools-for-transparency>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So last couple weeks we've been talking about lies and deception in marriage. And the biggest way, and we're pretty well known for this... We're not great at it, but we're known I think kind of for this award of transparency. It is one of the biggest ways that we can combat living in darkness, *[Ryan laughing]* living in the... What?

Ryan: We're just kind of known for this. Okay, thank you, babe. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Well, people are always saying like, "We love how you're transparent. We love that you show kind of your marriage, and your weaknesses and all of that."

Ryan: Back check, true. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: I guess it's just when people think Fierce Marriage, I think one of the words that comes to mind is transparency, which is good. I hope that it is.

Ryan: But we did literally write the book on it. See-Through Marriage.

Selena: See-Through Marriage. You can go check it out.

Ryan: Check it out.

Selena: It's so see-through you can't even see it. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Only video watchers will get that joke. So today is practical tool. So in response to the previous two marriage episodes we've talked about, deception, lying, truth-telling, and what's the importance of honesty in marriage, here's some tools for truer honesty. In other words, transparency, right?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Did I say that right? Okay, perfect. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:10] <music>

Selena: So before we jump into this conversation, I am Selena Frederick. This is my husband—

Ryan: Ryan Frederick.

Selena: And we are the faces, voices, everything behind Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting, fierce all the things.

Ryan: Thanks for joining us. We know that it takes time and attention to tune into something about marriage to make your marriage better. So our hope is that we will do that, we'll help you, we'll serve you well to that end, making your marriage better.

But more than that, we just want to shine the light of scripture on these issues and areas of life. And that's kind of our promise to you is that we're gonna stick to Scripture, we're gonna stick to the gospel, and be as honest as we can because we're talking about honesty today.

So if you want support, like, subscribe, rate, review, YouTube, podcast, whatever. All that stuff really matters. By the way ratings on podcast, it's like I can't escape my past. *[Selena laughs]* So we've been doing this for five years and real early on-

Selena: We were not that great.

Ryan: We weren't good at it. A lot of times we would-

Selena: God still use our feeble efforts.

Ryan: Yes. And we would talk over one another. Sometimes we still do that.

Selena: Aah. Just kidding. *[Ryan chuckles]*

Ryan: Because we kind of read each other's minds in a sense we know what you're trying to say and we'll try to say it maybe in a better quicker way.

Selena: You can read my mind? It's on record he can read my mind. *[laughs]*

Ryan: It's on record that you can't read mine. I'm kidding. *[both laughs]* So anyway, people generally when they find the podcast or listen to the first episodes, and then they'll comment, and they'll be like, "Right, that's all great. You guys are good, but here's..." By the way reviewers are really sweet about this. It's not against them. It's irritating to me. Old me irritates new me because I feel like we've grown.

Selena: You have.

Ryan: So I'm being honest. We're talking about transparency. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Transparency. And sometimes it hurts. And sometimes-

Ryan: So anyway I'm thinking about ratings and reviews. And we do read those for better or worse. Thank you if you've left one.

Selena: They do help us.

Ryan: Leave a comment on YouTube if you're there. I'll try and be too much more meta for the rest of the episode. So, recap.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: What do we talk about?

Selena: Two episodes back we talked about three lies of isolation. I'm not gonna give those away. You can go check them out for yourself. But three lies we tend to believe in our marriage that kind of keep us isolated from one another and also our Christian community. God is inviting us to live in the light and to live transparently. There's promises in that. There's flourishing and freedom to experience in those and walking obediently in God's way.

The second, I think this last episode, we talked about was lies and deception in marriage. So what happens when your spouse lies to you? What happens when you find out that they're lying to you? What can be your response? What is your response? And how can you deal with that? At least getting your foot on the right path.

We're not counselors by any means. We just kind of share what the Lord has taught us. But we hope to just get your feet on the right path. And whether that means going to a pastor or finding, you know, help depending on kind of the level of the brokenness of trust, then we would invite you to go to the place that you need to find help. So today's conversation.

Ryan: Living specifically in truth or as John, as a gospel writer, as New Testament author often calls truth light, or references the light that is Christ and walking in light of all that Christ said and did and accomplished. And it occurs to me that these types of conversations always kind of... they have assumptions underneath them.

Any worldview that someone carries—secular worldview, religious quote-unquote worldviews, we are Christian so we have a biblical worldview—they always are making claims about truth. Because life needs truth. And even if you say there's no truth, there's no absolute truth, then that's going to be your

absolute truth is that there's actually no absolute truth. That's kind of one of the great [00:05:00] ironic things of humanism and relativism.

The point is lying has to do with operating outside of an established truth. Whether or not you recognize the same truth implicitly or explicitly, lying is a breach of that, of that truth contract that we have with one another.

When we get married we say, "You know, to have and to hold, till death do us part, I do. And you're the only one for me." *[laughs]* I'm tempted to quote Michael Scott right now. *[both laughs]* I can't though because of the way he said. You're the only one for me, and that's going to be true for our entire lives. And you can trust me, and I will always act with your interests in mind.

Now, when I go outside of acting with your interests in mind and then I conceal those actions for fear of shame or fear of hurting your feelings or fear of damaging our union, I operate outside of truth. So I just want to be very overt in saying that we must be operating from the same truth.

Another question worldviews tend to ask or tend to make claims about has to do with authority, has to do with an ethic, a way of acting, a way that is right and good and true, according to our authority and our truth claim. So all of this will only make sense if we say unequivocally God's truth is the truth. We are to conform ourselves to His truth.

And the authority by which He's communicates that truth and governs our hearts by the truth of Him and His law and His character is scripture. So we're gonna go to scripture here, and we're going to take it as true.

Now, if ever our own views differ from scripture, then it's our job as Christians to say, "I was wrong." And you turn from that. And I need to turn to truth and obey. That's called repentance. So I just want to have that lens that... So we're not reading scripture just as nice ideas. We're saying these are true things that we need to live as if they're true.

Selena: Right. It is the authority that we as Christians live our life by. It is the one that we submit to.

Ryan: And it's funny how... Sorry, I jumped in. But it's funny how often you have to say that because not everybody actually says, "Yeah, I'm gonna let it tell me how to live. I'm not going to choose how I want to apply it."

Selena: Yes, we often go to the Bible for some good advice. "I'm having some hard time, so I need to read the Bible." No. We should be reading the Bible because

it is the truth. It is our soul's food where we get life, where we understand and operate.

Ryan: And know God.

Selena: Yes, It's ultimately how we know God. So it is not just this other resource that we can pull off the shelf with all of our other help-me books, right? It is the resource and it is the way that we know God. So we have to rightfully hold scripture where it should be held, which is above us. And our desires. [inaudible] define our desires.

Ryan: So we're going to talk through 1 John 1, the walking in the light passage. You've heard us mention it countless times because it's just such a perfect articulation of this idea and it gives us a great place to jump off of.

However, I want to undergird it with one other thing, okay? Because John's the author, he has certain ways of writing, certain mechanisms that he uses in the Greek. And "light" is one of those huge things that he's using to prove false the narrative of the day that had to do with who Jesus actually was.

So John set out to really prove to people who'd read his gospel that Jesus isn't just a man. He's not just a martyr. He was the light. He is the light. He is God.

And one of the ways John does, and this is in the Gospel of John... So we're talking about the Epistle of John today. But the Gospel of John which is John proper, you could say, he starts off the book: *En arche en ho logos, kai ho logos en pros ton theon. Ho logos* is what he's calling Jesus is the word. So in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God.

Logos is also the word for kind of like the wisdom of the day. The philosophy of the day. So John is pushing back just in how he's already constructing his argument on this idea that Jesus is less than God. So when we let that truth, that reality bear its full weight on our hearts, I think we begin to see, and obviously this plays out in the rest of the Gospel of John, but what is the result of this? Our starting place is the authority and person work and salvation of Christ. Walking in transparency does not work if we try to do it on our own, for our own benefit.

Selena: In our own way.

Ryan: We walk in transparency because it's the way God has called us and commanded us to walk. So I know all of this kind of is rehashing and I know it's not really in the script, but it's important [00:10:00] for us to root ourselves

in that because it does give us the means and frankly the courage to step out in faith into these hard conversations.

Ryan: So we want to make sure that we're all on the same page as far as definitions go. You were talking about living in the lights, what that means. We're gonna define what it means to live transparently and then how to deal with some of the fears that might come along with living in the light.

And then we'll share a few of our own experiences and how the Lord's kind of taught us and lead us on this journey of transparency. And then we're going to leave you with three tools to help cultivate transparency within your marriage so that you can embrace the promises and the flourishing that God has for you.

And that's not to say like this is the prosperity you'll be given if you do this. It's not "I do this and I get this." It's "I do this, my heart is learning to submit and do these things." It's not just my actions and my physical body, but it's also the spiritual man of me submitting and learning and doing what the Lord has instructed me to do. And if my desires don't match up, I'm going to humbly submit trust, and then watch as the fruit grows. And then I can engage with that fruit, and you know, eat it, consume it.

So living in the light. We talk about 1 John 1. Also 1 John 2:1-6. But this first one, verse five, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

It's so interesting to me how we can make God a liar, we can deceive ourselves, right? Just the deception and the lies that happen when we don't walk in truth, when we don't walk into transparency and in the light of who he is.

Ryan: We were just talking about that before we hit record here.

Selena: We did.

Ryan: Adam and Eve- *[both laughs]*

- Selena:** He said, "What did Adam say?" And I'm like, "Which Adam. We know Adams. What are you talking about?" And he pulls out his Bible. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Because I was trying to recall what exactly did Adam say when God said, "Who told you you were naked?" And he said, "It was the woman whom you gave to me who gave me the apple, and then I ate it." Like he didn't just blame Eve, he blamed God. He made God a liar.
- Selena:** Wow.
- Ryan:** This is the, you know-
- Selena:** The first prime example that we have.
- Ryan:** Yes, it's the first prime example. So we tend to do that too when we do it. John's describing here: if we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar-
- Selena:** Shifting all the blame.
- Ryan:** ...and the word is not in us. And there's that word again for the word.
- Selena:** Right. Right.
- Ryan:** So our ability to be honest with God and honest with, frankly, ourselves and with our spouse says something about—I'm just gonna say it—the word being in us.
- Selena:** Yes, absolutely.
- Ryan:** So if you were unable to be honest with yourself before God, that is an eternal problem, friend. And we'll talk about that toward the end. The point is God's not a liar. There's no deception in Him. There's no false, darkness, or deceit in Him. He is truth itself but He also is... He's unable to tell lies. It's outside of His character.
- Selena:** For sure. Sure.
- Ryan:** So we have to walk in full view of what the scripture is specifically saying. So 1 John 2.
- Selena:** 1 John 2:1-6, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours

only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

I love the part that he talks about if we know him, we say we know him. But if the truth is not in him... I just think of... is it in Revelations? I don't know. It's probably the four gospels. When Jesus is saying, "Many will come, many will knock and say, 'God, I knew you. We spoke in the town square together. We did this.' And he's like, 'Get away from me. I never knew you.'" I mean, the amount of fear and terror.

But I feel like this speaks to it as well because you're saying, "Yeah, I know God. Yeah, I read my Bible, but I'm dealing with the sin. Yeah, God's working on it. God's working on it." And if we're not radically killing the sin that's in our lives and submitting it to the Lord and killing it by being transparent with our spouse about it, [00:15:00] especially when it has to do with them, then we are not actually living in the light. We are not actually walking the way that Jesus has called us to walk.

And this is not "Okay, this is the march of shame. Like you have to go do this, and it's gonna hurt your marriage. And it's all the thing." No. This is the path forward. It says that He is faithful to forgive, He's faithful to bring us back together, restore our oneness. But it's not an easy journey. But that journey is necessary in order for the strength of the oneness to happen.

Ryan: Well said. That verse you mentioned, I just want to draw one piece out of it very quickly. "Get away from me. I never knew you." That to me is a terrifying potential result of self-deception. So we need to be very careful not to take lightly our ability, propensity, desire to self-deceive when it comes to areas of shame and sin. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, when they went and hid, they weren't hiding. They certainly thought they were. God asked, "Where are you?" not because He didn't know because He was drawing them out of the hiding.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And in the same way, God could be using these moments, the Scripture to draw us out of the hiding.

Selena: And to draw us closer to Him.

Ryan: Amen. Because that is where the closeness happens is when we come out of hiding, we then are in His vicinity.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: So self-deception is-

Selena: Is real.

Ryan: It's dark, it's real, and it has eternal consequences. So let's just be honest with ourselves by the grace of God. Holy Spirit help us see and know you clearly and see ourselves clearly in light of who you are.

Selena: So always with the talk of transparency and sharing with your spouse, there's a lot of fear that can be, I think, just in our hearts, in our minds we're dealing with. "Well, I gotta tell him this. I'm afraid that he's gonna get mad. He's never gonna trust me. He's never gonna let me have the debit card ever again." Or "he's never going to trust me to not go on social media and talk to someone I probably shouldn't be talking to, you know, of the opposite sex or something."

So, we want to address the idea of fear here biblically. So again, we have 1 John 4:18. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."

The Bible also tells us that we should... He tells us what we should fear and what we should not fear, right? So the fear of man. We should not be afraid of what man can do to us or what man can do to the body. We can and should be afraid, but the fear that we should be having or holding, I guess, within us is this reverence and holy fear and awe of knowing who God is and who we are in light of Him, and knowing that He is the one...

I mean, Luke 12:4-7 says, "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Ryan: I love it. This is a very dark picture, right? Fear him who, after he has killed, has the authority to then cast into hell." That's a pretty scary, dark picture for something... Jesus said that by the way. Red letter Christians.

Selena: Red letter words.

Ryan: Jesus said. So there's this very real call out of the falsehood into the truth. And then He follows up and so loving. He says, "Yes, I tell you, fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?" These tiny little birds, they're helpless, you can crush them literally in the palm of your hand.

Selena: And there's so many of them, right?

Ryan: And they're so many of them. And pennies is a very small value. So Jesus is making a very stark contrast here between the result of like a true fear of the Lord is... And this goes back to 1 John 4. Fear of the Lord is not a fear that's afraid of punishment. We want to make that crystal clear here.

Think about if you have kids. Everyone is a child of someone. Think about if you've been punished out of a sense of anger and wrath and from a sinful place versus when you've been corrected in love. Perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

So I think what John is saying there is perfect love... or because fear has to do with punishment, but affection or fear of the Lord has to do with correction. And with our kids they know that when they're being quote-unquote, punished or disciplined. We don't use the word punish in our household. We use the word consequence because that's cause and effect. We also use the idea of correction more than we use the word punishment. So anyway, I just want to make sure he drew that meaning out of there.

And then you had here fear the Lord. The Old Testament nations heard of Israel's God and they feared Him they recognized Him [00:20:00] as the God I Am and this ripple effect into Canaan and to the nation surrounding them.

Selena: Yeah, I think when I first read through my whole bible doing a reading plan, I knew the holiness of God so much more by reading the Old Testament. You kind of hear the stories of the Old Testament, and you're just like, "Oh, yeah, I am familiar with those." But until you read and understand it's a repetition of Israel going away from the Lord coming back, going out, being defeated, coming back. Like you understand the holiness of who God is and how the people, the nations of the time, the strength that they had recognized Him.

And they recognized who He was because of the power that He displayed. Because this was a very polytheistic culture that they lived in. So the heart cannot love what the mind does not know. It's a quote that we love about Jen Wilkin. She says that. I think we want to encourage you to... the call for

transparency is not just to lay everything out and say, "Okay, here I am. This is me."

Ryan: There's an end in mind.

Selena: We want you to know each other. We want you to do what it takes to know one another so that you can have the oneness, you can cultivate the oneness, you can experience the oneness that God has for your marriage.

Ryan: The transparency equals freedom. And that's I think what you're drawing out is there's greater freedom and living where you're free of whatever shame and guilt you've been holding on to. And you're free to then walk in the light and just deal with it. But also it's a free your way of living.

So there's kind of two levels of transparency here. There's the ongoing. We've created systems and habits for us to live transparently with one another. And then there's a transparency sense of that, oh, I've held something back, and now I need to be known by you in that thing.

With that, let's get really tangible. We have three tools. Of course, there's more than three possible. These are three that we've found to be powerful, useful, relatively easy to implement for building transparency and maintaining it.

Selena: Right. And before we jump in, I mean, there's this whole underlying, like, we've talked about in the last couple of episodes as well as repentance and forgiveness, and how those are a mark of a believer.

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: They are fruit produced out of the Holy Spirit at work in your life. So we were like kind of, you know, should a tool be repentance? Like, well, no, that's just the walk of a Christian. That's not an actual tool to help you. That's what we should be doing and submitting under anyways. So go back, check out those episodes. I think it's 261 and 260. But these are tools that are the next step kind of outside of that.

Ryan: If you're thinking, "How can I do this? Like, why does go in and just bear out all my dirty laundry at home tonight? Is that how I live transparently?" That's one way to do that. I don't know that that would be the most productive.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: There are ways that are more productive than others while still being honest. These are some ideas. And you might think of some on your own. The first tool is speak simply. In other words, just say it and get it out. Rip off the band-aid. I think we have a way when we feel ashamed or we kind of want to soften the blow-

Selena: We want to justify it as much as we can.

Ryan: There's some tactics needed. So you don't want to be completely terse and not aware of how your words are going to land. But you also don't want to use words as a way to skirt around the truth. So say it simply, say it clearly, and get it out.

And now it helps to have a conversation well before that is necessary with your spouse that says, "Hey, when we deal with something that is difficult, let's make a promise to one another that we'll be clear and honest when it comes time to communicate around whatever that issues is."

Selena: And clear and honest doesn't mean you just say whatever you're feeling at whatever moment you're feeling it. And it's not attacking. Being clear and honest about the piece that you need to own and the sin that is happening. So unclutter your communication. We were joking about that because you're saying declutter or stop cluttering. And we're cluttering our communication by trying to not clutter up communication. But that's just one way to think of it.

Ryan: So speak simply. The second way. Commit to digital transparency. There are a lot of philosophies and ways to go about this. Here's the Ryan and Selena method of digital transparency. We've been writing on this for almost a decade now. *[Selena chuckles]*

Basically, we have one tool. It's really tangible. It's called the phone drop test. So at any moment I could drop my phone on the table and say, "Go for it. Look at texts. Look at emails. Look at browsing history. Look at social media, messaging accounts. Look at everything." And at any moment, I could do that without fear of being discovered.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: It's a barometer for me. Maybe thermometer. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Something that measures.

- Ryan:** Measure something in my heart that says, if I feel even a wince of hesitation at that thought... [00:25:00] Selena has never once asked me to drop my phone on the table. She's never been like, "Drop it, buddy." [Selena chuckles]
- Selena:** Well, I would say that's my caveat too, as the spouse that... what might be the requester of the phone being dropped. You gotta try it with grace and mercy. And remember we're not policing, our spouse. When we're rebuilding trust, that's what we're doing. We're rebuilding trust with one.
- Ryan:** The test has more to do with your hearts in response to the prospect of that.
- Selena:** I would say we both would say, Okay... And maybe that's something you need to do in the time that you're, "Hey, these next few months while we're rebuilding trust, every Friday night at eight o'clock, let's do a phone drop test for both of us. And we can just switch phones, and check everything on each other's phones and just see where we're at."
- Ryan:** It's also a great way of caring for one another because-
- Selena:** It is.
- Ryan:** There's some folks that can kind of seep into your life-
- Selena:** Undetected a little bit.
- Ryan:** And they might not be like predatorial in that they're trying to snatch your spouse away, but they might be toxic friendships, or maybe toxic relatives. Say we've talked as a couple we say, "Listen, we're not going to talk to your sister that way," if you have a sister.
- Selena:** Right. "We're not going to share these issues with her."
- Ryan:** Right. "We're gonna give them some space because that's really hard on your heart and you can tell." And then I go and I...
- Selena:** See how y'all likes-
- Ryan:** On your phone...
- Selena:** Liked all my-
- Ryan:** I'm saying if you-
- Selena:** ...invisible sister thing

- Ryan:** The prospect of your husband, seeing that you've been talking again to your sister after we talked about that, and I can see how it's affecting me since we asked you not to.
- Selena:** *[laughing]* We asked you not to.
- Ryan:** Anyway, you get what I'm saying.
- Selena:** Yeah,
- Ryan:** It kind of become a way of keeping a balance and a check-in place to, again, be honest with one another. It's like, "Why didn't you tell me you were talking to that person?" Because you know that I would not be okay with it.
- Selena:** And it feels more challenging when you start just like anything, but trust the process. Stick to it. In a couple of months you probably won't have to be having that phone drop test and you'll just be in a better place.
- Ryan:** Good.
- Selena:** Social media password, logins, have protection, accountability against certain sites. He knows all my passwords. He will go on and post something about himself on my social media. *[laughs]* He has been known to do that.
- Ryan:** I should do that again.
- Selena:** Oops! We venture on the side of having joint bank accounts. We share all of our finances.
- Ryan:** We didn't venture on the side of it. We encourage couples to do that.
- Selena:** Sure. Venture just came out, sorry. It's a weird word I guess. A little bit of a cold, so clotting my thoughts.
- Ryan:** It's okay. Quit sniffing.
- Selena:** I'm sorry. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** I was sick the last two weeks. So that is our policy. A complete utter openness when it comes to our finances. We do have roles to play in managing it. It's funny because you can't see one of our accounts because it's just a logistics thing.

- Selena:** You can only share so many.
- Ryan:** It was checking account and savings account. You can't see the savings account.
- Selena:** Because boy, if I did... Just kidding.
- Ryan:** It's a joke. But there's transparency, though.
- Selena:** Hopefully, these are things that will just kind of spur your conversation on. So the first one again is speak simply. Say it. Be clear. Second one: commit to digital transparency, whatever that might look like for you. The third: have predetermined clear boundaries in place to protect your integrity.
- Ryan:** To protect integrity. So this again goes back to your worldview. It goes back to what you actually think about yourself. I'm a sinner saved by grace, covered by the blood of Christ, being regenerated moment by moment, sanctified moment by moment, but still I can sin. And I still know that my heart is deceitful above all else. And that in a moment of weakness I have the capacity to sin in many ways.
- So protecting your integrity is setting up the systems and boundaries around your heart so that you have a better chance of winning those battles. And that's wisdom and that's discernment to do that. The Holy Spirit will obviously help you in those hard moments. But if you're a longtime alcoholic, you're not going to go park your car-
- Selena:** In front of liquor store.
- Ryan:** ...in front of the liquor store. So you would obviously avoid it like the plague. So some ways we do that: clear boundaries in place beforehand to protect integrity. Friendships. So we have a very strict policy in our marriage. I'm never alone with another woman unless it's my mom or your mom.
- Selena:** And I'm never alone with any other men.
- Ryan:** We have obviously a lot of friends. I'm never alone with their wives. Like even if it's a logistics thing, I'll take a cab. Like we're not going to ride in the same car together if it's just me and her.
- Another thing is we have folks that work with us, and all of them are almost all are female. And if I have meetings like... I work from home, so the meetings happen here in my office or at home. Actually, not in our office ever. They're

always in... even not behind the closed door. They're in a room but only if you're home and the doors on the room are French doors and a glass.

Selena: They're very specific doors. [00:30:00]

Ryan: Very specific doors.

Selena: It is just how the house is.

Ryan: The point is I'll cut the meeting short or reschedule a meeting if that's... I just will not be alone. It's not like anything's going to happen. I mean nothing-

Selena: Just the idea of-

Ryan: Just the idea of it.

Selena: Yes. Yes. So having friendships also like on social media that your private messaging on your own, and your spouse doesn't know. I mean, you can get an occasional like, "Oh, hey, your kids are growing. That's awesome." Like, "Thanks." And if it goes any further than that, I will just be like, "Oh, hey, so and so has been messaging me, this is what we've said. If you want to see it's fine. But like that's it." So again, there should be no questions, there should be no hesitancy. Those are the goals you're going for.

If you travel for work or your spouse travels a lot... He did use to travel. I used to travel a little bit more than that. You never worried about me. I'm just kidding. *[chuckles]* I never worried-

Ryan: I did.

Selena: I never worried about you. *[chuckles]* But check-in times with a spouse, "Hey, I'm going to call you at this time." And he always had guy friends to check in with to ask him the hard questions because I don't need to police him alone. Alone. Other people will police him. No, I love him and I want his heart to be protected and his mind, so I want to check on him as his helper and his wife, and someone who loves him.

And then you were saying don't over-consume anything that would kind of lower your inhibitions. Like we're not against having a beer with dinner, right? But if you're working and you go to a bar and you decide to drink, and then your inhibitions are a bit lowered, that is just an open door for temptation.

Ryan: That is to say be wise. And obviously it's a sin to get drunk for a reason. Because I think it's a gateway into many other darker, more damaging things.

So set those boundaries in place beforehand. Here's a really quick example from our lives again on the... Because we've always pushed back on that. Well, what if you're actually going to text my friend's wife? It's weird. People push back on that. We have our friend who we've known for 15, 20 years maybe?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: She cuts my hair. I always-

Selena: She's cut my hair first. We've known her 20 years.

Ryan: She's a good friend, trusted, all that kind of stuff. But when I schedule haircuts, it's a group text. So Selena is kind of like gets through it. But I feel safer there.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely.

Ryan: I feel like it's more honoring to you there. It's more honoring to her there. I feel like it's way better. So that's just a clear example of that boundary is just there. Like we just don't breach the boundary and I love it. It helps.

So I think that's the three main or three tangible tools that you can start walking in transparency today. Like I mentioned early on, these all kind of are undergirded by this understanding that there is a truth, there is a way to live that is right, there is a way to live that is wrong. There is a way to live that leads to life. There is a way to live that leads to death. Namely, there is a person that leads to life and there is a person myself that will lead to death.

We've told you in the past few episodes we're not gonna miss this opportunity. So if you're listening to this, you think, "Man, I really want that level of honesty, I want to feel close to my wife, I want to live in the light, but I'm afraid," we're here to tell you there's someone drawing you out of the darkness. And his name is Christ. It's not Ryan and Selena. It's Jesus.

This is His word. We're talking through words of Scripture. He's saying, Walk in the light, as I am in the light so that you can have fellowship with me with, with one another, have fellowship with Jesus, and you'll be cleansed in righteousness. And in that you will then not only have light but life.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And not only life but life abundant.

Selena: Right. Again, he's a Savior who wants relationship with you. Right? He loves you. And I think that's just the part of me that has struggled. If you've had

broken relationships, it's hard to imagine a God that would want to have a close relationship with you and know you, be known by you.

So just understand that He's not just calling you out for a good life. He's calling you out because He loves you. He created you. He created you in His image. There's purpose and design behind you. That's not the ultimate. It's Yes And. Like He wants to know you, He also wants to give you these things, but He wants you to know Him and He wants you to just be able to engage with Him. And it's a beautiful thing.

Ryan: This life will come and go but God will be here.

Selena: His word will stand.

Ryan: His word will stand and your relationship with Him will be all that matters—relationship to Him as one adopted in or one who has rejected Him. So we're saying, join the family, friends. Party is awesome. Let's pray and we'll call it an episode.

Selena: If you have any questions, you can go to the-

Ryan: Sorry. thenewsisgood.com. Go to thenewsisgood.com. It will allow everything that we just discussed, but also kind of path forward into committing your life to Christ, turning from sin, and walking with Him.

Selena: And no doubt you have a Christian friend that's just waiting for a text or some questions. So reach out to them, friends.

Ryan: All right, now we can pray. Lord, I thank you for the gift it is to walk in your light, [00:35:00] to be known by you and still fully loved by you so that in our marriage we can know one another fully and still fully love one another. Despite our imperfections, despite the sins that we've committed, the sins that have been committed against us, we can still know and love one another in marriage. And it is a gift and it's by your grace.

Lord, I pray for the husbands and wives listening to this, watching this. I pray that they would be emboldened, not by their own strength, by their own courage, by even our words, but they would be emboldened, drawn out of the darkness by your words, by your word that is your Son in the flesh who died so that they can be in right relationship with You, and by Your grace in right relationship with one another. We walk in that. We walk in your light. We love you, Jesus. In name, amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Our friends, again, that website is thenewsisgood.com. Check it out. Other than that, 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

- **Scripture reference**
 - 1 John 1
 - 1 John 2:1-6
 - 1 John 1:5-10
 - 1 John 2:1-6
 - 1 John 4:18
 - Luke 12:4-7

- **Recommended resources**
 - [The News is Good](#)

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