

10 TOP MANIPULATION TACTICS COUPLES USE

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Ryan: I think sometimes when we hear the word "manipulation" or we hear about manipulation happening, we can often think it's kind of an idea that it's out there. "I don't do it." Right? It's something a lot of people do to us or that we witness, but we don't do it ourselves.

Selena: Or we say, "He is so manipulative. My spouse is so manipulative." It's never us owning it for ourselves.

Ryan: Yeah. And as we've studied manipulation for this episode but also for past kind of things that we've done, I'm always amazed at how we can subtly manipulate each other in our own marriage. A lot of times we know what we're doing it. I would argue that we don't.

Selena: I don't know.

Ryan: Everybody know what we are doing.

Selena: But he keeps telling me when I'm using a manipulation tactic and I'm like, "You know what?"

Ryan: I'm very good at pointing them out. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Just stop.

Ryan: So today we're talking about 10 Common manipulation tactics that married couples use, people in relationships they use these on one another, and they oftentimes don't even realize it. So we're hoping that this will be elucidating episode for you and it could help make your marriage even more healthy. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:59] <music>

Ryan: So I never told you about this... You love when I start a sentence with that. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: Always my favorite.

Ryan: I had a dream the other night. Did I tell you about my dream?

Selena: I don't know. [Ryan chuckle] Probably not. Because if you're this funny about it-

Ryan: I had a dream that you and I were at some sort of like camp experience. And it was some sort of relationship-building thing. There were couples, and every couple had to get up and sing some song from the *Les Mis* [Selena laughs] in front of everyone else.

Selena: So I let you solo, right-

Ryan: Have you ever had a dream where you're-

Selena: ...on your favorite song?"

Ryan: Have you ever had a dream where you're saying yes to something that like in the back of your mind you're like, "Why am I agreeing to do this? This is insane." But it was like normal and we were supposed to do this.

And we're up on stage, everybody's waiting for us and I'm fumbling around on Spotify for the background track and I can't even remember the name of the... I can't type it for the life of me.

Selena: Because you're so nervous?

Ryan: Because I didn't know what *Les Mis* song I should sing as a duo. [both chuckles] I don't know. It was a nightmare. It was a literal nightmare. Woke up sweating. Cold sweats. [laughs] I don't know why I'm talking about that now in a mutilation episode. But yet, as I was reading on manipulation-

Selena: Did you feel manipulated in the dream?

Ryan: I felt like you were at fault. [both laughs] No. I manipulated myself. I bamboozled myself.

Selena: I manipulated myself in a dream.

Ryan: As I was reading up on manipulation tactics, I kind of felt sub texted in some ways.

Selena: Oh.

Ryan: Like, I thought, Oh, they're reading their mail. And there's a few I think we're gonna get a kick out of based on some of our last recent struggles we've had over the last year or so. So let's just dive into it.

But first, we have to bring your attention to this awesome shirt that Selena is wearing. If you're watching this, you can see it. It says Woman by Design. If you're listening to it, you can't see it. You got to watch the YouTube video so you can see it. It's awesome.

Selena: But you can go check it out.

Ryan: Not just shirts. There's these awesome sweatshirts.

Selena: Super comfy. Really comfy.

Ryan: Yeah. And I can't wear them of course. But the whole reason for these shirts-

Selena: That's the whole reason you can't wear them.

Ryan: Exactly. We did an episode called Woman by Design last week, introducing the shirts, introducing kind of pushing back on this cultural narrative that people seem to be very confused-

Selena: About what a woman is.

Ryan: And we don't mean to be in your face with it but we also don't want to shy back from any sort of truth. So the goal of this shirt and these sweatshirts is not to... We hope to start conversations. We hope to encourage women by saying, Listen, you have a place and it is a place that is designed by God. And to own it and to say-

Selena: It's a beautiful place.

Ryan: A beautiful thing being a woman. I wouldn't know-

Selena: Thriving, fruitful. It's a wonderful, amazing place to be. God is good in His design. And He is perfect. And there's purpose in it.

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: And to share the truth and not shy away from it is one of the most loving things we can do.

Ryan: Amen. So go to womanbydesign.us and you can find out more information there. There is also Girl by Design because we have three daughters. And so we thought, "You know what? They're not women yet, but they're girls."

- Selena:** They love wearing the shirt.
- Ryan:** They love their shirts.
- Selena:** Yeah. Emmy was like, "Is that the Girl by Design shirt?" And I was like, "How do you know? Yes. Yes."
- Ryan:** There's gonna be different-
- Selena:** So good.
- Ryan:** ...ways to get those and bundle those up together on site. So go to womenbydesign.us.
- Okay, the top 10 manipulation tactics couples use. First, before we talk about those, what is manipulation? What is it? I have this definition. Went to the interwebs for this. This is what the interwebs said.
- Selena:** Oh, dear, I don't know if I can trust that. [both chuckle]
- Ryan:** WebMD namely. You'll find a lot of these definitions. I thought this one was fairly helpful. And it says this: "emotional manipulation occurs when a manipulative person seeks power over someone else and employs dishonest or exploitive strategies to gain it. Unlike people in healthy relationships, which demonstrate reciprocity and cooperation, an emotional manipulator looks to use control or even victimize someone else."
- And so the intro makes little more sense now because it's like, do we consciously try to use control and victimize each other in a loving marriage?
- Selena:** I think we justify it and use put other terms to make it not sound like those things [*chuckles*] in our minds, but yes, we do.
- Ryan:** And there are degrees of these things.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Like, I'm trying to use you for financial gain.
- Selena:** Joke's on him.
- Ryan:** Sugar mama over here.
- Selena:** Jokes on him.

Ryan: Or I'm not trying to like victimize you because there's just some... It's just like, but we can do degrees of these things to one another.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: So from a biblical perspective, how should we view manipulation? That's the psychological WebMD version of it. From biblical perspective, at its core... This comes from Got Questions. They said this. Do you want to read that, Sel?

Selena: Sure. "At its core, manipulation is a type of lying. When someone speaks falsely for the purpose of deception, he or she is being manipulative, because to deceive is to manipulate someone into thinking or behaving a certain way. So all of the Bible's prohibitions against lying can be applied to manipulation. Lying is a dreadful sin." It's one of the abominations.

Ryan: Yeah, absolutely. Actually, I'm gonna go back to the Proverb... Actually, Matthew 10:16, Jesus, I think, said this. He says, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

So here's the idea behind that. "Be shrewd as snakes." Don't be taken advantage of as a believer, as someone who's been sent out on behalf of the gospel. But, but be also innocent as doves. So when you say manipulation is a lying tactic, we call it what it is, we want to speak very forthrightly, we want to not have any lying ways in us. Be charitable to one another, be generous in our love for one another in marriage.

Selena: Pure in our motivations.

Ryan: I want to be as innocent as a dove.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And as far as the being shrewd as a snake or wise as a serpent, I'm not constantly like-

Selena: Hedging your bets.

Ryan: ...maneuvering. There's an innocence to-

Selena: Because I always win anyways. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Of course. It's not a hill I'm willing to die on. *[Selena laughs]* As part of the innocent as doves piece, I'm trusting you to love me well.

Selena: Right. Right. Right.

Ryan: So I'm not constantly maneuvering, like, you know, to be shrewd.

Selena: Right. But I think there are some marriage relationships that deal with that.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Manipulation is real and both... Like the wife would say, "Yes, he's manipulative," and he would say, "Yes, I am manipulative." They're just ingrained so deeply into the life of the marriage that their daily just existence is hedging their bets and trying to like get the most from each other for each other, right? Like it's not an actual covenantal love.

Ryan: Speaking of covenantal love, in a Christian context, there's a unique opportunity for manipulation. This is category of spiritual manipulation where "God said." "God said that we need to... You know, God said, we need to have more kids." Like, what do you say to that? "God told me we need to have more kids."

And what if your spouse is not at peace with that particular revelation from God? Did God turn you into an oracle? Did He turn you into a prophet? That's one way to do it. Or you take the Bible out of context.

Selena: And we see this in terms like submission, head of household. Like the authoritative stances that are directly in opposition, I think, to what the Lord is saying.

Ryan: Yeah. Or a wife could take that passage, "The wives submit to your husband" as an excuse by which to enable sinful behavior.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: And that's a form, in a way, of spiritual deceit. You're saying, "The Bible just says I gotta submit to my husband." Yeah. But the Bible also says your husband shouldn't be doing what he's doing, whatever he's doing.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: Whether he's not being a holy head of the household or whether he's actively sinning. So there's a way that, you know, we can manipulate the words of Scripture to our nefarious ends. And all of this, of course, is... Usually, on a

subconscious level, it's a way for us to gain power, it's a way for us to gain control or influence.

Selena: Sure. All the things the enemy tempted Eve with in the garden in Genesis 3. "You could be like God." What are some attributes of God? He's all-powerful. He is all in control. He is in control of everything. He is all-knowing.

Ryan: When you see gaslighting is like the first manipulation tactic that happens. "Did God really say that? I think you heard him wrong. I think you should question yourself."

Selena: Oh, man.

Ryan: "Eve, you don't know what you're talking about." "Did God really say that? Listen, He's just holding out on you, man." That's gaslighting. We'll talk about that a little bit more detail later in a few minutes. But yeah, it's this idea that you make the other person doubt themselves.

Anyway, let's get right into it. So that's what manipulation is. From a biblical lens, manipulation is lying. How does it actually work itself out in a marriage? And then after that, we'll talk through kind of how to uproot it if it's in there. So what's number one? This one is-

Selena: I don't know. You did a little more research on this. So I'll let you do number one. I can do number two. *[laughs]*

Ryan: By the way, as we read through these, these are all very common in like cult tactics. So this might sound off, but a cult is just basically anything that's an offshoot of Christianity that has its own kind of source of divine knowledge, has its own source of authority, and uses it to control the members. And so when you're being recruited for a cult *[laughs]* or you're being coerced or manipulated to stay in it-

Selena: Manipulated. It's clearly manipulation tactic.

Ryan: Yeah. So these will all kind of resonate in that way too.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Love bombing is the first one. That's when they give you intense and persistent attention and affection to quickly create emotional interest and dependency.

Selena: Mm, they bomb you with love. They're like, "Oh, man, I see you."

Ryan: Well, I'm thinking about, you know, if I'm really insecure and I just want to have my wife kind of under my spell, I'm going to love bomb you. And it could be genuine, it can be disingenuous. What's not genuine is the motive. Like I could really love you but if I'm doing it as a way to-

Selena: Affirm myself.

Ryan: ...to get what I want from you-

Selena: Oh, yeah.

Ryan: ...that's when it becomes manipulation. And this is another one. It's kind of a subcategory of love bombing. And it's being accommodating now in this moment just to get something that I want from you later. [chuckle]

Selena: Kids do this clear as day when they're all just like, "I'll give you this if I can have that later."

Ryan: It's a bargaining. It's bargaining by some other name, right?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: This consequently is one of the most common manipulation tactics just among people is that you will butter someone up so that you can get something out of them later.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And it's kind of under this guise of reciprocity or that "I just love you. I just love you so much. Won't you love me back? This is how you can love me?"

Selena: If you gotta ask, [both chuckle] that's the question.

Ryan: Yeah. Okay, so that's number one. Love bombing. The second top manipulation tactic is guilt. So I'll just read what this says. People feel guilty when they don't live up to the expectations of people who are important to them.

If you know what makes your partner feel bad about him or herself and use that knowledge to get you what you need, you are using emotional blackmail.

Selena: Oh, man. I do that all the time. Just kidding. I don't know how to do that.

- Ryan:** I know that you want really badly to show me your love, right? And the way you do that is that you will... I don't know. How do you show me that you love me? Like you will go-
- Selena:** Make you food.
- Ryan:** Right. Okay. *[Selena laughs]* So it's really important for you to show to me that you love me by the food that you make. And if I know that and I start like kind of kicking around the food on my plate like, "It's okay. I don't like it. *[Selena laughs]* I don't feel like eating," I'm heaping on guilt.
- Selena:** He's always grateful. That's why I laugh. Because I will just throw something together and he's just like-
- Ryan:** "It's great." *[laughs]*
- Selena:** You're so loved.
- Ryan:** "It's totally not burned. Totally not burned."
- Selena:** If you haven't heard our fight about him asking me to cook better basically, you should check that out.
- Ryan:** I didn't ask though. That's not how... You're manipulating me.
- Selena:** Number three, *[both laughs]* gaslighting.
- Ryan:** You're remembering it wrong. Okay, so gaslighting is when someone dismisses what you're saying and they make you doubt and question yourself.
- Selena:** Yes. It's an emotionally abusive strategy that... It just questions everything about the person. Like you're questioning their feelings, their thoughts. Like, "How could you feel like this? Like you've been thinking about this? Are you insane?" Those types of comments of... yeah. That should be a clear sign of gaslighting.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Or they will say like... I joke about the whole Michael Scott reference "You're remembering it wrong." They try to convince you that what you remembering is false. This one's tricky because a lot of times the person doing this, they may-
- Selena:** They may not be aware.

- Ryan:** They may have convinced themselves of a different narrative. And that's a lot of pathological liars are so good at lying because they believe in the lies they're telling.
- Selena:** That they will actually happen, yeah.
- Ryan:** And they believe that they're being truthful. So they will try to gaslight it or will try to convince you of their version of the events is true and the one that you remember is false, and how could you remember it, by the way, because you're kind of crazy. You shouldn't-
- Selena:** Well, how could you remember it that way?
- Ryan:** So I'm always making you doubt yourself so that you're under my thumb, I control you.
- Selena:** Never. Never.
- Ryan:** That's the third one.
- Selena:** Oh, we're under his headship. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Oh, *[inaudible]* gonna love this. Martyrdom is the fourth one. So this is the idea that I'm somehow giving so much to you on a regular basis that I'm building up an emotional credit balance. Right. And it should make you then feel obligated. That when the time comes and I want something, you have to pay me back.
- Selena:** That's a bit like buttering up. A little bit like love bombing.
- Ryan:** Yeah, but it's a little bit slower burn.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** So I am always kind of taking one for the team. And then when it's time, like if something like say I wanted to... I don't ride motorcycles, but if I said, "Hey, I want to get this motorcycle" and it's not a good decision for us, but basically-
- Selena:** "You know, I took one for the team. I did this in the past."
- Ryan:** Right.
- Selena:** I feel like you've done that.

Ryan: Have I done that?

Selena: I feel like.

Ryan: I've never done that.

Selena: You bring up things from the past.

Ryan: You're remembering it wrong.

Selena: You bring up things in the past, you like, "You know, I've been feeling like this for like five years." I'm like, "What? You never even mentioned it."

Ryan: I don't remember that.

Selena: "I've taken on this for..." We'll have to discuss this later I guess.

Ryan: You're using generalities. That's another one. *[both laughs]* See, didn't make the list.

Selena: Number five.

Ryan: Selena goes deep tracks.

Selena: You have to. Using others to sell your idea.

Ryan: Another word for this is triangulation. Again, we'll go back to the... Maybe it's a bad example. "I think we need to have more kids. And by the way, I talked to my buddy, and he also thinks it's a good idea." *[Selena laughs]* So now you're now not just wrong, you're wrong according to him too.

Selena: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Your buddy *[both laughs]* has no say in our-

Ryan: That's true. That's a bad example. I'll think-

Selena: Maybe your buddy thinks I should make better dinners.

Ryan: No. Okay. So we had a guy's night proposed. We are not doing it. I haven't told you about it. But they wanted to go see Top Gun in the movie.

Selena: Without me?

Ryan: That's why I didn't talk to you about it because-

- Selena:** Thank you.
- Ryan:** ...it's a non-starter. That's what I told them.
- Selena:** Thank you.
- Ryan:** And I got some flak. But you know what? I took one for the team. Okay?
- Selena:** As you should. You are the husb... The man goes down, the girl goes free.
[Ryan laughs]
- Ryan:** So I could say, "You know what? They're all going. They all said it's a great idea. All their wives are saying it's fine."
- Selena:** "And I'm gonna come with you." *[chuckle]*
- Ryan:** So now I'm using that as a manipulation tactic, a triangulation.
- Selena:** Right. Okay.
- Ryan:** Because, you know, now you're not just against me, you're against everyone else who happens to agree with me. By the way, I've selected that demographically carefully. *[both laughs]* That's manipulating. Okay, number six, what's this one, Sel?
- Selena:** Overreacting to get your partner to feel badly about his or her emotions.
- Ryan:** Creating drama.
- Selena:** You are so drama. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** I'm so drama, yes. *[Selena chuckle]*
- Selena:** He's not.
- Ryan:** Creating drama is a typical way to get your partner to back down if he or she dislikes sins. Like that time that you wanted the candy at the grocery aisle and I said no, and you started throwing a tantrum.
- Selena:** You're remembering it wrong. *[laughs]* That was our two-year-old. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** And I said, "Fine, we'll get it," because you're overreacting. Don't make me feel badly about my emotions.

- Selena:** No. But I think that comes in the phrases of like less than you just should always be like this or you just kind of those flippant remarks of well, I guess that's just the way it's going to be because you always bla, bla, bla, whatever. That always never should be a real like, okay-
- Ryan:** That's another one.
- Selena:** That's another one of the overreacting, at least to me.
- Ryan:** All right, Selena, I want you read this one.
- Selena:** Of course, you do. *[Ryan laughs]* I'm not proud of these guys. I'm following along *[inaudible]* with my pants right now.
- Ryan:** I was chuckling while-
- Selena:** Presenting something as a gift for your partner when it was really something you wanted. *[both laughs]* You do that.
- Ryan:** No, I do not.
- Selena:** Some of his gifts are questionable.
- Ryan:** When did this happen recently? When did this happen recently?
- Selena:** Should we talk about Mother's Day?
- Ryan:** Should we talk about my birthday?
- Selena:** What did I get you? Oooh! *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** You forget so quickly.
- Selena:** That's a gift. The Lord has blessed me with forgetfulness.
- Ryan:** If you're not aware-
- Selena:** This is how we got our family dog named Charlie. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Even though I specifically told you not to get a dog.
- Selena:** But he didn't know that he didn't want. I thought he wanted one.

- Ryan:** That's a classic gaslighting. *[both laughs]* I've convinced myself of this truth, therefore it is now true scenario. "Our family needs this and it's for you. You're gonna love it. You just don't know it yet." Anyway, the dog is incredible. God is good. *[both laughs]* That was funny. Okay, so number eight.
- Selena:** We don't need to laugh too much about these. We just try to keep it light because some of these can get really deep and hurtful, I think as well.
- Ryan:** And if I'm honest, it's a little awkward sometimes sitting in this chair. Okay, so passive-aggressive behavior is number eight. So that's agreeing with your partner's request in the moment to avoid disappointing or upsetting them, but somehow never getting around to what you agreed to. That's passive-aggressive. It's like you just placate in the moment and then behind the scenes do what you want.
- Selena:** It's not what God tells us is when you make our yeses mean yes or no mean no?
- Ryan:** Yeah. Okay, number nine. This one's hilarious. Padding a request.
- Selena:** Padding a request. It's to ensure what you really want will be granted. So the strategy requires that you purposefully ask for much more than you know you will get knowing that your partner will offer less, which is what you really only wanted. You do that.
- Ryan:** When do I do this to you?
- Selena:** No with me. Sorry. I'm sorry. Not with me. When he's negotiating-
- Ryan:** This is a negotiation.
- Selena:** Yes, it's a negotiation tactic. Problem is this is not supposed to have happened in your marriage.
- Selena:** Yes. When you're buying cars, yes. Or when you're buying a house or any sort of like you can negotiate some pricing on things, yes.
- Ryan:** Right. I'll say, If a wife says she wants to buy this new pair of jeans or whatever and the jeans are \$100 and she knows that her husband won't go for it, instead she might go for like a \$200 pair of jeans. "I really want these jeans." And he says, "No." And then she says, "Okay, how about these \$100 ones?" And he's like, "That's better than 200 bucks." All the while she knew what she was doing.

- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** So the motive matters here.
- Selena:** Motive matters.
- Ryan:** So it's better have an honest conversation about stuff like that and just say, "I know you're not going for this. How can I make it?"
- Selena:** Because it gives an opportunity, I think, for the spouse also to be generous, right? It gives the spouse an opportunity to process through whatever the struggle is instead of, again, one person gaining control or one person getting all of what they want and desire. Because again, that's going to just breed bitterness and discontentment as well. Number ten.
- Ryan:** Very, very common. You know exactly what it is. The silent treatment. So they may ignore you or cease talking to you as a form of emotional punishment.
- Selena:** But I feel like you do, but I don't think you do it on purpose. But when you're in the funk-
- Ryan:** I definitely quiet when we're fighting because I don't know what to say.
- Selena:** Well, that's funny because I'm like, "He's punishing me." *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And that's why I try to say... We talked about this on the parenting side, by the way, funny enough. I try to say to you, "I'm not trying to make this miserable. I just don't know how to get out of it right now."
- Selena:** Yes, but it still feels miserable.
- Ryan:** Well, that's your own fault. *[both laughs]* Anyway.
- Selena:** That was a manipulation tactic. *[Ryan laughs]* I don't know which one, but it was. It felt like it.
- Ryan:** It's hard, people. It's hard. That's why this topic always makes me laugh because it's these little covert foxes work their way into your garden and-
- Selena:** They do.
- Ryan:** ...they start eating all your goods. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Well, and we need to ask the Lord to help us see those things, right? We need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us clarity, give us eyes to see when our motivations are impure. And we need to be humble and repentant. I mean, what other response can we have?

As Christians, we are called to repent and believe. We are called to humility. Why? Because we've already been justified in Christ. Our identity is already secure in Christ. So me winning something out of him is not going to make me a better Christian or a better person. It's actually going to probably lower me in terms of... not lower me because that disqualifies everything I just said. [chuckle] But it's gonna take root in my heart and start producing fruit that is not God-honoring, is not God-glorifying.

Ryan: Good. So as believers, we know that manipulation is a lie. How do we find our way out of it if it's become kind of the currency that our marriage is predicated on? Honest conversations. First off, you have to identify, A, that it's happening, B, that it's wrong, C, that you can grow through it, you can grow out of it and you can fight it. And the way we fight it is through Scripture.

So let's look at Ephesians 4:25. It says, "Each of you must put off falsehood. Out of falsehood, speak truthfully to your neighbor..." Your first neighbor is your wife, your husband, by the way. "...for we are all members of one body."

So that's totally calibrating in the fact that we are not only neighbors, we're spouses in a covenantal union, but we're also members of the same body of Christ. And how would our head, Christ, like it if there's infighting and manipulation happening among His members?

Selena: I would also argue Galatians 5 and it being a fruit of the spirit of self-control because we can very easily exercise these manipulation tactics as a means of gaining control for ourselves and not actually having ourselves under control.

Ryan: Right. Right. So how to move forward. Again, just to recap is find clarity in speech and in listening. In other words, know what manipulation tactics are at work in your marriage, talk about them, find clarity in that. Work through those through how you talk to one another, how you listen to your spouse.

Selena: Yeah, being charitable with one another.

Ryan: And be introspective. We will talk about charity at some point and charity in your communication. I think I'd like to do an episode on gaslighting entirely because gaslighting is so prevalent these days. There's the word. But be honest with one another, have clarity around it.

Grab some scriptures on truth-telling and put those somewhere where you're gonna see them every day. You know, if you want to get really practical, I would say just schedule some time over the next two to three weeks where you're gonna check in "how have we been doing at this?"

I know we talked about manipulation being something that we struggle with. "I've gotten better. I've been conscious of it. But maybe I'm doing..." And just have those conversations. I think over time you'll realize, you'll be able to see manipulation coming your radar.

Selena: Right. Well, and there's always motivation for and reasons why we manipulate, right? There's probably hurt and brokenness and a type of self-preservation that we feel like we need to engage in, we need to live in. So, again, there's a reliance on God. There's this understanding of our identity and who we are.

And so if we're struggling with that, then we need to peel back those layers, right? Peel back those layers of "Okay, why am I manipulating my spouse? Or why are they saying that I'm doing this and I apparently am doing this? What is in my heart, Lord?" And ask God to help you to understand what those motivations are and how He can help remedy and heal you of that and bring your union closer and more intimate.

Ryan: Yeah. The first step there is recognizing that you are not perfect, that you two are a sinner, that you two are prone to wanting to put people under your control. Because if there's something deep inside of us that feels insecure, we need to grasp for control until we look to Christ and we realize that He is the rightful King, He's the rightful perfect King and he has called us into relationship with Him.

So none of this would be possible, none of this awareness, none of this sanctification, this fixing would be possible unless the Holy Spirit were at work, unless Christ resurrected, which He was. And because of Him, we have new life.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So if you don't know what that means to be a Christian, to follow Jesus, we set up a website for you. It's thenewsisgood.com. Check that out. It gives you some really clear kind of thinking around what it means to follow Christ and some steps down that path. We would love to call you brother or sister in Christ. And we invite you into that. Not only that but also into the life that Christ offers, this abundant life that translated into your marriage, excuse me.

So with that said, Let's pray. Lord, thank You for Your truth. Thank You for the call that you've given us to walk in truth. I pray that You would help us do that. Help us be aware of ways that we are not being truthful to ourselves, ways we're not being truthful to each other, and ways that we're not being truthful to You.

I pray that You would give us tangible ways to obey You in these areas, to hand over to you whatever insecurities are causing us to act untruthfully toward one another in our marriage. I pray that we would have marriages that are built on You and built on the foundation of Your truth.

I pray for the husband of the wife struggling right now with hopelessness, struggling with anxiety around their marriage. They don't know what's going to happen or they don't have any peace. I pray that You would give them peace. Help them find a way forward and put people in their lives. Show them your word so that they might find a way forward. In Jesus' name, amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. I want to mention real quick, if you haven't yet, make sure you subscribe to the YouTube channel if it helps you. That would mean a lot to us. Leave a rating and review if you're listening to this on the podcast. Check out [womanbydesign.us](https://www.womanbydesign.us) if you want to see the cool merch drop going on there. We got sweatshirts, T-shirts, little girls t-shirts, Girl by Design, all that good stuff.

Also, this ministry is supported by the rocks that are our Patreon supporters. So if you want to be a part of that group of people, we would love that. Just go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. And there's some goodies there to be had. But we asked just one thing. If you do decide to partner, that would be because God is asking you. And no other reason.

So with that said, this episode is—

Selena: In then can.

Ryan: We'll see you again in seven days. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Matthew 10:16
 - Ephesians 4:25.
 - Galatians 5

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

Main Site: <https://fiercemarriage.com/>

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