

## ARE YOU A GASLIGHTER?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/are-you-a-gaslighter>

[00:00:00]

**Selena:** Okay, do any of the following phrases sound familiar to you? "You must be going crazy." "That's not what happened."

**Ryan:** Yeah, it sounds familiar. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** "You don't know what you're talking about."

**Ryan:** "Now, you're imagining things." That's another one. "Don't need to be so sensitive." "Just settle down." "I'm only joking. I was only joking."

**Selena:** If these phrases maybe sound very familiar to you or you've noticed a pattern in what you've been hearing from your spouse, or what you've been saying even, you might be gaslit or be gas lighting to your spouse. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Heyoo.

**Selena:** In this episode, we are going to discuss what exactly that is, what it looks like in marriage, some tangible ways to kind of recognize it, and then how to confront it and the abuse which is twofold. So if I'm the gaslighter, then how can I begin to get out of this? Or if I'm the abused, how do we start to confront the situation and the relationship and work through that in a godly and hopefully complete way?

So that is what we're going to be talking about today. We look forward to talking with you on the other side. *[Ryan laughs]* I always feel insecure when you start scaling. See you on the other side. *[chuckles]*

[00:01:16] <music>

**Ryan:** I don't mean to giggle. I feel like you kind of crumble at the end there. So you're afraid I'm gonna say something. But it's-

**Selena:** Yeah, I didn't know if I should leave room for you to say something. I don't know.

**Ryan:** It's okay. You're just imagining things. You're crazy. *[chuckles]* No gaslighting-

**Selena:** We're not trying to giggle here.

**Ryan:** We mentioned this as one of the kind of main manipulation tactics, weapons, tools that couples will employ-

**Selena:** Techniques.

**Ryan:** Techniques. And the underlying thing here that I think we need to undergo the relationship with, or excuse me, conversation with is that motive matters. Motive matters. And we keep saying like you may not know if you're doing this to your spouse.

**Selena:** We'll talk about how you can know.

**Ryan:** Yeah, we'll talk about that.

**Selena:** But sometimes it's hard.

**Ryan:** But sometimes you deploy these tactics not knowing what exactly it is. And I think by putting a name to it, understanding what it is you can start to actually walk more in the light and see it truly for what it is and therefore see the effects of it if you've not yet seen those. And the effects are not more health, it's more unhealth. It's more than dysfunction, I should say.

So, before we get into that, welcome back. My name is Ryan Frederick. This is my lovely wife Selena Frederick. Imagine that same last name. So old-fashioned.

**Selena:** So old-fashioned.

**Ryan:** We are the faces, voices, founders of all things Fierce, namely, here on the YouTube channel on the Fierce Family. If you're listening to this, it's the Fierce Marriage podcast.

We've been doing this for about nine years. We've been married going on 19. But around our 10th anniversary, we said, "You know what? There's a lot of couples that need to be pointed to Christ. Let's just point them to Christ." And that's what we're doing. And you know what? God has kept us here doing this. So thank you for joining us. It's an honor to have you.

As a quick mention, we don't do this hardly ever, but we do have books and resources. If you're looking for tangible ways to grow your marriage, we have The 31 Day Pursuit Challenge. That's like kind of every husband and wife books. And they each have their own challenges and how to love one another well and pursuing one another in the name of loving like Christ. We also have the 40-day prayer journey.

**Selena:** So if prayer is something that you kind of are not great at in your marriage and you maybe want to get better at, I'd probably recommend those books. If you're feeling like there's a bit of a cold snap or you're trying to reconnect with your spouse and you're having some problems, definitely go with The 31 Day Pursuit book and take a break day in there. That's our only thing we didn't write into that book was some break days. So do like seven days, take a break. Do another seven days, take a break. Just work it out.

**Ryan:** Or three days. It's up to you. The book will serve you well. If you want to find those, go to our website. It's [shop.fiercemarriage.com](http://shop.fiercemarriage.com). We have a good number of resources there for you.

We also have these new shirts. Selena is not wearing it, but it's these "Women by Design" shirts, which I don't wear them. [Selena chuckles] But Selena wears these shirts-

**Selena:** For a purpose, yes.

**Ryan:** Go to [womanbydesign.us](http://womanbydesign.us). You can find out all about those. And we've talked about those in the past-

**Selena:** And on our social media feeds and whatnot. So today we're talking about gaslighting for a few reasons. Because like Ryan mentioned, two weeks ago, I think we talked about manipulation and how gaslighting is one of the primary tactics of manipulators in marriage or manipulators in general.

We are a marriage podcast. And so gaslighting happens more often than you think especially and even in Christian marriages. So it's something that we need to identify, like you said, and begin to learn how to walk in the light and bring God glory in that. Also...

**Ryan:** We want you to be aware of it and equipped to fight it, not just so you can have a better marriage. That's part of it. But we believe that's actually secondary to having a marriage that honors Christ and that displays the love of God in Christ in the ways only a marriage can. [00:05:00] Now, it doesn't mean that everybody's called to marriage. That maybe a tangent. But the point is, you are married for a reason that's bigger than you.

And so we believe that if you can kind of become more intelligent, have your marital intelligence raised, then the opportunities to glorify God in that grow kind of in direct proportion to that. So we're going to be aware of it and equipped to fight against it.

**Selena:** And I'd say not only equipped to fight against it in your own marriage but possibly recognizing it in other marriages around you. *[Ryan laughs]* Not that you need to be the police, but how can we...

**Ryan:** That's why I'm laughing.

**Selena:** How can we love others, you know, and maybe if you see somebody struggling, help lead them into the light?

**Ryan:** So Selena, I'm gonna ask you a question here. You're ready for it, don't worry. Gaslighting is one of these terms that we-

**Selena:** We hear it a lot.

**Ryan:** We hear it a lot. My dad is a psychologist, and he has been doing private practice for like 30 years. And he even now he's like coming to grips with the fact that what gaslighting is and-

**Selena:** How prevalent it is.

**Ryan:** I mean, how prevalent it is. It's one of these words that if it comes up in a conversation, you're like, "Oh, yeah, that's horrible. You shouldn't do that," but we don't really know what it is. And so knowing what it is I think starts with knowing where it even came from, which I think is a very potent example for illustrating what it actually is. So Selena, where did the term gaslighting even come from?

**Selena:** It came from a movie, a 1944 movie called *Gaslight*. And it's about this couple, a man and wife, they go move into her aunt's house because her aunt died or her aunt was murdered. I don't say aunt. That's weird to say it.

**Ryan:** I think it's very elegant sounding.

**Selena:** Okay. Well, her aunt was murdered and so they're going there to try to like, you know, I think figure out what happened and take care of her home and all of her things left behind. Anyways, as they are there, apparently the wife has some mental health issues along the way that are hinted at, but things start happening, things start going missing in the house, and then the lights that are gaslit start dimming on occasion.

And then she starts to think that like, you know, it's haunted or something, maybe she's going crazy or something. So she goes to her husband, and she's like, "What is happening? I feel like these things are happening." And he's just

like, "You're crazy. None of this is happening. You're imagining it? How could you even think that I would do something like that?"

Anyways, spoiler alert, if you're gonna want go watch the movie, then don't watch this anymore, but he is the one that actually murdered the aunt, and he was there to try to find all her jewels and treasures-

**Ryan:** Jewel. *[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** Very 1944. ...and was convincing his wife that she was crazy in a way such a way that made her want to stay isolated and stay in the home and not talk to anyone else. And so he was just trying to get her to be such a recluse, that he could just basically control her and do whatever

**Ryan:** Control her. So there's this undermining of her very sense of reality-

**Selena:** Oh, yeah.

**Ryan:** ...with the end in mind of control or controlling the narrative at least-

**Selena:** Yeah, for your own gain.

**Ryan:** And then isolating you off of that in that undermined reality so that I can have the upper hand in the marriage.

**Selena:** And I think it's important to read a few definitions just, again, for clarity and for kindness. If you are listening and you're like, "Oh, my goodness, is this something that we're dealing with?" The Gottman Institute, very famous for relationship, counseling, all of that, said, "Gaslighting is an insidious form of emotional abuse. It involves the denial or warping of another person's reality." That was tweet.

One therapist said, "Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse where the perpetrator gains control and power over another through slow, gradual manipulation, and invalidation by way of lies, criticism, and isolation. This leads the victim to question their reality, memories, and sanity." Google was just "manipulate someone by psychological means to question their sanity."

And then I liked this one, because we're big Got Questions fans. It says, "Gaslighting is a form of emotional and psychological abuse designed to gain control over the victim. While this article assumes a female victim, gaslighting can be perpetrated by women against men.

Gaslighting has three main components: 1) Convincing the victim that the abuse she suffers is her fault, 2) Convincing the victim that she did not experience what she thinks she did, and 3) Separating the victim from people who support her. The tone of the victimizer can alternate between concerned and kind, and angry and abusive. The victim slowly learns to mistrust her own judgment, perception, and even sanity until she relies on the abuser to define reality for her." They say that gaslighting is sin and comes from the place of selfishness and a desire to control.

**Ryan:** Wow. I mean, we've covered a lot of ground and just the first few minutes.  
*[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** I like definitions. I feel like it gives you clarity, it kind of puts together a few different words so that you can have a bigger picture. I mean, it still brings in more questions and how do we actually know what gaslighting looks like in marriage.

**Ryan:** That quote from... is it Mugatu from *Zoolander*? He's like, "I feel like I'm taking crazy pill."

**Selena:** Yes, yeah.

**Ryan:** If you've ever felt like you're taking crazy pills, [00:10:00] you may be getting gaslit. All right?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** The question here now is, what does it actually look like in marriage? Because it definitely happens outside of marriage. It happens in the church. It happens certainly cult kind of environment.

**Selena:** I think it can even happen in the workplace a ton too.

**Ryan:** And it happens I think, culturally. I mean, we're experiencing a good bit of that. And not to get down this rabbit hole, but in the wake of the Roe v. Wade verdict being overturned, there's a lot of gaslighting happening there.

**Selena:** Yeah. So I think one of the ways that we can truly know if we are being gaslit or we are gaslighting is it develops into a repeated pattern of manipulation. So it's not just kind of a one off, like, "I was just joking. You don't understand." But it's a constant pattern that causes you or causes the person to question their self, to doubt their self, and to just constantly depend on you for their version of reality."

We're gonna go through six gaslighting examples that will, again, hopefully bring some clarity around what this looks like in marriage. And then-

**Ryan:** We'll give you a way to kind of deal with it.

**Selena:** Absolutely.

**Ryan:** Okay, number one, trivializing. So it looks like they minimize your feelings, they suggest that your emotions don't matter or accuse you of overreacting. So it's usually more subtle than what it's gonna sound like here. So just know that it's not going to ever look exactly like we're describing.

So to be completely transparent, you and I have dealt with this a little bit in our marriage. Because I'll have emotions-

**Selena:** How dare you? *[Ryan chuckles]*

**Ryan:** ...and I'll be like, "Selena, I'm frustrated," and your knee-jerk reaction is to say, "Well..." You don't say it in these terms. But basically say, "You don't have a basis for your frustration," or the frustration itself shouldn't be there.

**Selena:** Right. When I'm trying to explain my side of the story or I'm trying to validate myself and not mean to invalidate him in the process. But unfortunately that's kind of what happens.

**Ryan:** Yeah. And so the opposite of that is to say, "Well, I see what you're feeling and I recognize what you're feeling. Now let's deal with how you're feeling instead of just kind of dismissing it and telling me not to feel that way.

This comes out a lot in parenting too because kids' emotions are so irrational many times. You can say, "That feeling does not make sense. Stop feeling it." And in reality they just need to go through it, not around it.

**Selena:** Many of the articles I read were like kids are champion gaslighters to their parents *[both laughs]* because they're just like, "I never heard her telling me to do the dishes. Mom never told me to do the dishes."

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** And so it's just interesting.

**Ryan:** Because they're sociopaths-

**Selena:** Stop. They are not.

**Ryan:** They're very good at convincing themselves of a part of the true reality and making that the entire true reality. So trivializing. So-

**Selena:** See, they're minimizing or overreacting.

**Ryan:** And again, the anecdote there—and maybe we'll just touch on anecdotes as we go—

**Selena:** That's good. That's good.

**Ryan:** ...is don't go around the emotion, go through it. Deal with it. If someone's angry, the answer is not just stop being angry, but what's the root of that anger? And you guys, this is a gospel reaction to this. God never asked us to deny what we're feeling. What He does ask of us or require of us is to deal with emotions in a godly way.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So yeah, don't go around, go through those tough emotions.

**Selena:** I think that's a good indicator. If you find yourself trying to avoid it, stop, pause, try to figure out the way through it.

The second one is countering. So they question your memory, they make up new details, or they just flat out deny that something even happened, or they might blame you for the situation entirely. So what would be the antidote here?

**Ryan:** Well, it takes a good bit of charity and truth. So, as husbands wives, we need to learn to train our eyes to see situations accurately, and to be honest with ourselves, and to frankly, to be okay with being wrong. Because a lot of times, the reason why you're countering and questioning the memory is because you do not want to be wrong.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And so already you've lost sight of the whole point.

**Selena:** How quickly we've lost sight. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** And it's not about just winning the argument. It's about adhering to God's truth because that's how we adhere to the Word of God, that's how we adhere to obedience to God, is by seeing truth as the straight up and down line that



it is and not letting our own manipulative hearts manipulate our minds into thinking something's wrong. So the antidote is just train your heart to be okay with being corrected and train your heart to love truth more than being right.

**Selena:** Well, and doesn't the Bible talk about like the fool does not like to be corrected, but the wise man heeds correction, discipline. You trust the discipline of the Father. And so, if we are balking at the correction that we're receiving, then we need to lean into it. I mean, in all honesty, like keep leaning into it.

**Ryan:** Right. Because pointing back to the Gospel, the end game is to be sanctified unto the image of Christ. As we are running our race, that we might cross that [00:15:00] finish line with strength, being wrung out for the gospel. The end game is honoring God along the way. And so correction is a leg up into winning that game is to be corrected so I can stop this behavior, whatever it is.

**Selena:** And I feel like there's this theme of knowing truth. So you know, they say that people who can find counterfeit money it's because they study the actual true real money *[chuckles]* and they know. They can sense the counterfeit. They know. They can see the counterfeit within it because they are so acquainted with the truth.

And that is how we need to be as believers and followers of Christ: be in the word daily, being in prayer daily, conversing with other sisters and brothers in Christ, not forsaking the gathering, worshiping the Lord in spirit and in truth. So those are the ways, again, that we can be equipped to fight back the lies and the darkness is just being so acquainted with truth.

**Ryan:** So the number three example of how gaslighting works itself out in marriages is withholding. So another way to look at that is they brush off your attempts to have a discussion or they accuse you of trying to confuse them. See what that is? So it's like I'm responding something you said to me and now I'm making you question what you're saying, because you're trying to confuse me and really I'm trying to debase what you're saying.

In other words, I'm trying to make you question your own reality. Instead of just engaging with what you're saying, I've now circumvented what you're saying, and I'm going straight to your motive. Which God touches the heart, not me.

Now, we know our spouses, and we kind of we know that they can touch buttons, we know tones. I know when you're being mouthy, which is most of the time, frankly. *[Selena chuckles]* And so they'll brush off your attempts to actually have a discussion about a hard thing. And instead, they'll say, "No, I'm

not going to engage with your idea because your idea itself is without merit, because you're crazy after all."

**Selena:** Yeah. "And you're just trying to confuse me, this is you trying to attack me." So it's hard because I feel like they turn the tables, but in such a way that there might be like a grain of truth within the withholding or the attempt to withhold.

Number four. Is that?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Diversion. Diversion. So when you bring up a concern about their behavior, they change the subject or they turn it back on you, once again, by suggesting that you're making it up. So I think that's pretty self-explanatory.

**Ryan:** I'm just trying to think of specific examples. And this could be as benign as, "Hey, you're always home late. You always say you're gonna be home at 5:30. You're never home before 6:00. What's the deal?" Then the knee-jerk reaction could be, "What are you talking about? I've been home this many times at 530, or whatever."

And so immediately they're questioning the historical... instead of lovingly looking at their spouse and saying, "In your heart, whether or not it's true, let's deal with this fact that you think that I'm not honoring my word when it comes to being home in a timely manner."

**Selena:** "Let's address this. You feel this..." Because sometimes I will say things like that. Like, I will say, "Oh, I feel like you..." The 'you always' and 'you never' statements are very triggering. Because he can be like, "Well... I'll say, "Okay, I don't feel like we've spent any time together." And he will say, "Selena, we spent all day together yesterday. We also spent the whole evening together and we tomorrow are spending..." I could be spending weeks with him and feel my bucket just has a hole in it. Right?

**Ryan:** Well, that's a good point. Because as a husband, then it's my job to recognize, to think, "Am I not spending time with my wife?" And if I go through the inventory of my mind, our calendar and look back, "I am actually spending time with my wife." The next question is not: how can I prove her wrong? Next question is: why does she feel disconnected from me?

**Selena:** "Because he's on his phone all the time."

**Ryan:** Am I? *[both laughs]* I'm not on my phone. We're both on our phones. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Yeah, there's a reason for disengagement. But again, it's going through, it's going to, it's not going around.

**Ryan:** Or you're not doing quality things that would create connection. Instead, you're just kind of maybe existing near one another and not actually engaging and connecting with one another.

Number five is forgetting or denying. When you mention a specific event or something they said, they might say they can't remember or tell you, "It never happened at all."

**Selena:** Like men in black right there. *[chuckles]* Like, "That's never happened."

**Ryan:** This is particularly kind of insidious when there's a dynamic in the marriage where one person already has the upper hand. So the person may be coming to the table with this question or they're mentioning a specific event that they have issue with.

If they don't have the upper hand, the manipulator, the one with the control will then deploy this tool to then once again make you question yourself.

**Selena:** Right. And then honestly a lot of gaslighting leads to infidelity. It's led to affairs. [00:20:00] It's sinful. It's dangerous. It's darkness. And we need to rid our marriages of it. We need the Lord's help.

**Ryan:** Again, back to the beginning, we have one more left, but back to beginning just as a recap or as just to remind you, motive matters. So if you have a wife or a husband who is consciously trying to do these things, they're gonna just know how to do it better now because they've watched this.

So our plea to you is look to Christ. Repent if this is something that you find yourself. And if you find that you're doing this because you're hiding things, repent of those things that you're hiding, turn from them-

**Selena:** Come clean.

**Ryan:** Come clean for the health of your marriage. Frankly, the health of your soul. Now, you're saved by grace. But we cannot live in unrepentant sin. That is not something Christians do. Categorically, that's not what we do. We repent, we believe. We repent, we believe. And so, motive matters. If you find you're

doing these things unintentionally, ask the Lord to make those moments clear to you.

**Selena:** And those motives clear.

**Ryan:** And if you're listening to this and you're denying it, even as you're watching this or hearing this, we're just praying that the Lord softens your heart.

So let's do the final one. Number seven, right?

**Selena:** Six.

**Ryan:** Number six: discrediting. So they suggest to other people that you can't remember things correctly, you get confused easily. Or "Selena likes to make things up." And they like to make things up. This can threaten your career when it happens at work. It'll threaten your marriage when it happens in your marriage. It'll threaten friendships when it happens in friendships.

When it starts to undermine the very... I don't know, it discredit to you and under undermines you as an individual. And man, how counter to the spirit of marriage is that? We're in a marriage, sure. At some point we got together, we got married, we said I do, we said our vows, and over time we've grown apart to where now I am seeing her as a completely different part of my life that I can discredit her without also undermining myself.

But Paul himself said in Ephesians 5, a man does not want to harm his own body, and therefore he should love his wife as he loves himself. So think of it like this. I'm discrediting my wife. I'm discrediting myself and if not before men, definitely before God because we are one flesh. And so I need to serve her. Of course, it goes both ways. But yeah, discrediting is very much against it.

What's the antidote to that? I think is to see yourself rightly. And to, again, come clean of whatever that motive is. But see your spouse as somebody made in the image of God, worthy of honor and respect.

Now if they are making things up, that's a different story and that's a different category of marital dysfunction. But if they aren't making things up but you're making people believe they are, you're discrediting what they say or how they feel because in your mind you think they just make things up, she can't really feel that way, that's a dead end in your marriage and you need to back out of it and go another way.

**Selena:** So we've talked about six examples of gaslighting, hopefully giving you a bigger, better picture of what it actually looks like. Gaslighting will often lead you to feel a few things or do a few things, again, that we want to hopefully shed light on.

It leads you to often doubt and question yourself, which you've seen that theme through the last six examples, to wonder constantly whether you're too sensitive, you are apologizing frequently all the time, even for things that maybe you don't truly understand, or even should be blamed for, you have difficulty with decision making, you feel generally unhappy, confused, and not like your usual self. Gaslighting again often leads you to avoid loved ones since you don't know how to explain what's going on.

**Ryan:** Right. Because from the outside, this will look clear as day. We've had a situation in our own personal lives where we have loved ones that are being gaslighted and we've tried, tried, tried and said, "Can't you tell that you're being lied to? Can't you tell you're being manipulated? How can you not see this?" "Oh, yeah, well, you know..." And they kind of acknowledge what you're saying, but they don't really want to engage with it because somewhere deep down... This is how it got through to them, remember—a conversation.

I say, "This is what happening" And I said, "Deep down you know, you know this is what's happening, but you're not willing to admit it because you're afraid that you're right and everything that comes along with being right about something like this." And that was a lightbulb moment. It was the beginning of I hope to be the healing or at least the closing off of that manipulation.

The relationship healing is going to have to be an act of God. But to everyone outside, they're going to know very clearly. And if you find yourself wanting to avoid people who call it into question, that should be a huge red flag.

**Selena:** Right. Right. So gaslighting, you know, we said it came from this movie, but more importantly it comes from a place of either great fear or great narcissism. It can be learned or instinctive. It's often difficult for a gaslighter, like you were saying, to admit that they have a problem because they kind of believe at some point that they are putting the world into kind of this proper place [00:25:00] in this way, and the goal is reasonable and it's not asking a lot but anyone who works against that goal they think is wrong and needs to be set straight.

But the Bible of course, instructs us differently in this area, right? Instead of doing stuff selfish, having conversations selfishly and in a way that is one-sided and controlling, the Bible instructs us to do everything... "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, value others above yourself,

not looking to your own interest, but to each of you the interest of others. That's in Philippians 2:3-4.

**Ryan:** Romans 12:3 says this, "For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you do not to think of yourself more highly than you ought. But rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith that God has distributed to each of you." And that's what we talk about being lovers of the truth of God and being lovers of seeing things rightly. That's what Paul's talking about. Seeing yourself, thinking of yourself... Thinking of yourself with sober judgment. I feel that's a loaded term. It's easier said than done.

**Selena:** It's a mark of a Christian life. Again, the death to self and flesh and sin, right, the death to ourselves but the life in Christ. So the life in Christ is a selfless one. The life in Christ bears with one another. Go a few verses down. Romans 12:10, they're devoted to one another. "Be devoted to one another," it says. "Honor one another above yourselves." Again, counter... what? Not countercultural, but somewhat countercultural to the whole like gaslighting.

**Ryan:** Encounter flesh. Because flesh would say that we want-

**Selena:** We want to be right, we don't want to be wrong, we don't want to be the person causing this.

**Ryan:** Those are things versus too let go to heart if you find that some of this is pricking your conscience and thinking, "Well, I've done these things and I'm a gaslighter." Like, admit it, and then run to the truth, run to Christ. And then run your spouse and ask them to help you, to forgive you, to work with you, as you are sanctified.

**Selena:** See counsel.

**Ryan:** Seek counsel. Get outside perspective. Run from the darkness, friends.

**Selena:** They also, in the research we were looking at this, they said that it can come from a deep-seated wound that you may not even really understand where it's come from. And so by seeking counsel, by having someone else come in and help you unpack some of that. You know, Jesus can heal. And He is willing. So for the person who's abused or the abused-

**Ryan:** The person who's being gaslit.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** God made us and designed marriage to be interdependent on one another and designed the relationship between individuals and the body of Christ to be interdependent. Okay, notice that's different from independence and it's different from codependence. It's interdependence.

So we don't just run away from these types of problems. We work with others through them. So this is the call to you if you're being gaslit, and you're realizing it: be dependent on people in your life... Be interdependent rather on people in your life to see this stuff called into the light and dealt with with righteousness and holiness. And pray. This is gonna come up later. We have four ways to begin dealing with it tangibly. And pray that God will soften your heart, soften your spouse's heart as you go through this.

Psalm 25:5 says this, "Guide me in your truth and teach me for you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."

**Selena:** For the person who was abused, I mean, it can feel like truth and reality is just unraveling. And so clinging to God's word, clinging to the truth and reality of who He is going to be so important. Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

**Ryan:** I love this. This is in 2 Timothy 1. It says, "The Spirit which God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." So don't be timid. Because that's not the Spirit that God has given you. You have the Helper, the Holy Spirit in you helping. Now, walk in and step with the Spirit by faith.

**Selena:** And I think there's a difference between being timid and being humble, right? I think timidity is, again, a consistent pattern of being-

**Ryan:** And it's fear-based.

**Selena:** And it's fear base whereas humility is faith-based. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** So four tangible ways to begin dealing with gaslighting. The first one is going to be pray. Please don't just throw this one out as like a token Christian point. We need to pray for clarity and discernment on whether or not... frankly whether or not it is gaslighting by you or your spouse. I pray that God would heal you and your spouse of this sin. And pray earnestly. Pray for your hearts to be soft and to have confidence in the Lord.

What's the second one?

**Selena:** So seek counsel. Again, this is a bringing somebody in, not being isolated, which is the third one. But seek counsel from mentors, like Christian mentors, trusted friends, pastors, a Bible-based counselor. Seek counsel.

**Ryan:** Don't do it alone.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** I want to jump to the fourth one. It'll be the third one now. [Selena chuckles] Keep a journal. This is very, very practical.

**Selena:** I want to be careful with this because- [00:30:00]

**Ryan:** You want to know what your objective reality is.

**Selena:** You do.

**Ryan:** And sometimes you doing a journal, you can better-

**Selena:** There's three ways that I think a journal can function. Because in some of my non-Christian research, I guess, they wanted to have evidence, you know, to show that the person is wrong-

**Ryan:** Which isn't the word-

**Selena:** Which is not bad word.

**Ryan:** ...but it's okay.

**Selena:** Evidence sounds more harsh than a journal. So we say keep a journal. It can be used in three ways. One, to remind yourself of the facts and the truth of God's word and the reality that you are in. Number two, to possibly take notes to determine whether or not it's gaslighting. Like if you're questioning things, write some things down and process it.

And three evidence, if and when you decide to seek help, if it is confirmed as gaslighting, it's hard to remember every single instance in every single response. But if you can take a few minutes after something and say, "This is what I said. This is what happened, and the response," I think it will hopefully empower you again, not to win but to find that reconciliation, to find your way back to unity and oneness.



**Ryan:** Well, a journal is a way of verifying the truth because you know that your own memory can be manipulated. But if you write it down-

**Selena:** Absolutely.

**Ryan:** ...it's fixed. I wanted to have one other point here on how to deal with it in your marriage. This, again, came up in our own lives recently. Don't settle for fake evidence. Like we talked about keeping a journal. If you're trying to rebuild trust, do the thing it takes to rebuild trust, because so often when you're being manipulated, you want to believe the best and you want to believe the narrative because you don't want to deal with the reality of you being lied to or being gaslit. So insist on the truth.

And if you remember, we went down this kind of journaling route, it wasn't journaling, it was another aspect, another aspect of seeking truth that was very objective, very fixed. And it was the way to open up that door and start walking in the light. Because otherwise you just keep going down this dark hole, it gets darker, more isolated, more cloudy.

**Selena:** And you are ever so hopeful, I think, in the situations. And so it just plays against you because any thread... A gaslighter will be kind to you in a moment but then the next moment be super aggressive. And that kindness will be like... it'll hook your soul and your hope and then you'll think that, "Oh, things are changing. Oh, we're growing," when in reality it's not the case.

**Ryan:** Right. So if this is you, hey, we're praying for you and we're asking the Lord to show you clear ways that you can begin walking out of this. As a believer, we're called to new life, not just at the moment of salvation, not the moment that God plucks you out of the fray of eternity and saves your mind. That's new life.

But then we're this ongoing process of sanctification where this life here and now is being renewed day by day in our own flesh, that we are being sanctified is what the Bible calls it.

If you're hearing this and you think, "Yes, I want that, I want new life, I want to be called God's, I want to walk in the light," we're here to tell you that that invitation is wide open. And that would mean for you to drop everything, and to pick up the cross of Christ and follow Him.

And the way that looks is you just become a Christian. And that may not mean a lot, so we've set up a website for you. So you can find out what it means to become a Christian. The website is this: [thenewsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com).

Go there. There's some doctrines there, things of what it means, what you're actually believing in, and then there's paths forward into Christian community and into discipleship from there. And we hope that you take us up on that because we do want to call you brother and sister in Christ. We want to see your marriage flourish, not just for your own good, but for the glory of God. And as a result, for your good.

With that said, let's pray, and then we'll call it. Lord, I thank you for your truth. I think you that your truth is reliable, that it is fixed, that is not a moving target. Lord, we pray that you'd help us to live as those who know you who are the capital T Truth. Help us to love you as we love the truth. Help us to honor you as we seek to find the truth.

Help us to find health in our marriages, so that we may not be people who are twisting the truth, bending the truth in the name of manipulating and claiming power for ourselves. But instead, we would align ourselves with your truth and giving you all the power and all the glory in our marriages.

We pray for the husband who's discouraged, encourage him. We pray for the wife who feels hopeless, give her hope. It's only in you that we have hope. It's only in you we have courage. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, this podcast, this ministry only possible because—I mean that—because of our patrons. So if you're a patron, thank you. We sincerely mean that. Our gratitude is yours eternally because you are a big part of God's grace in allowing us to do this work so that He might be glorified.

So if you want to be part of our small group of patrons, you can go to this website. Go to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner). And we just ask one thing, that you would go there only if the Lord leads you. And that that would be an act of obedience for His glory.

With that said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

**Selena:** In the can.

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

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

## PODCAST NOTES

### ▪ Referenced scripture

- Ephesians 5
- Philippians 2:3-4
- Romans 12:3 s
- Romans 12:10
- Psalm 25:5
- Philippians 4:8
- 2 Timothy 1

### ▪ Recommended resource

- [The 31 Day Pursuit Challenge](#) by Ryan & Selena
- [40-day prayer journey](#), David Carder
- [thenewsisgood.com](https://thenewsisgood.com)

## FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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