

## YOUR TONGUE IS FIRE... DOES IT WARM OR BURN?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/your-tongue-is-fire-does-it-warm-or-burn>

[00:00:00]

**Selena:** As we've aged into marriage more and more,-

**Ryan:** Great, we're just gonna go. *[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** ...I think you get so much more familiar with one another. And it's scary how easy and quick you can be with your tongue, and how cutting you can be, or how encouraging you can be, right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Because you know someone so well, it's so easy for you to either abstain from even saying something which is another form of not using your tongue, right? We're gonna go through James today. James 3, I believe, the first section, and talk about what it means and why we should be taming our tongue, and how it pertains to marriage.

**Ryan:** Let's do it.

**Selena:** Okay, we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:43] <music>

**Ryan:** Young married person, whether you're watching this, listening to this, whether you're a husband or a wife, I think the most dangerous time verbally for a young couple is going to be whenever that honeymoon phase fades, from that moment that it's faded and you realize, okay, the theater patient is gone. This is just real life-

**Selena:** It's never gone.

**Ryan:** ...you realized your spouse is human-

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** ...they're not perfect, you realize that you're not a perfect spouse, from that moment until you mature to the point where you understand what James is saying in James chapter 3 here, that's gonna be the most dangerous time in your marriage, verbally speaking? Verbally speaking. How does that sound?

- Selena:** Verbally speaking. *[chuckles]* Slightly redundant. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** So our hope here... *[chuckles]* I don't think it's redundant. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Just leave it.
- Ryan:** So our hope here is that we would accelerate that understanding, so that time period between when you realize that you're not perfect to the point where you understand your words are powerful. Because in that moment I think is when you have the opportunity to be really cutting toward one another.
- Wives... you know, we're talking about sins of aggression, sins of passivity that might crop up in the area of speech to one another. But wives contend to kind of want to usurp with their tongue where husbands would want to dominate with their tongue, with their words. So we're hoping that you can make that period non-existent in your marriage.
- Selena:** I mean, it just attributes why it's so important for young married couples, or any couple that... you know, we'll just say any couple, is rooted in Scripture is spending time daily in the word, whether it's memorizing and... I mean, you go through different seasons in marriage, and sometimes you can read and just absorb chapters and chapters and chapters of scripture.
- But then there's some days where you're being demanded by four children, and you need to just work on a scripture memory because that is what is getting into your heart, going through one, two, or three verses just to remind yourself of why I'm not going to say the cutting things that I'm thinking in my head or why I'm not just going to ignore or dismiss what my husband is saying.
- Ryan:** Real quick. I love that you just said for children demanding of you. Because we do have four children. Just the fourth one who happens to be very demanding is still in Selena's-
- Selena:** In the womb.
- Ryan:** In the womb. So that's awesome. Yeah, because that child is certainly demanding of you, I can tell you firsthand.
- Selena:** Sometimes.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Keeping you tired and exhausted.
- Selena:** It's good tense. All the signs of life.

**Ryan:** So let's read. Let's jump right into James 3:1-12. Selena is gonna read it for us today.

**Selena:** I'm ready. "Taming the Tongue. Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and saltwater? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

**Ryan:** This is such an interesting passage. Selena, you had a moment pre-record here where... So I'm currently on the tail end of learning to... I'm learning Greek. I'm on the tail end of all that. [00:05:00] And so I'm translating James currently. And I said, you know, "We should read the version I translated." You're like, "That's heresy." [Selena chuckles]

**Selena:** That's like heresy? [both chuckles]

**Ryan:** I thought, you know, "You're not gonna give me a little bit-

**Selena:** No. Well, because the way you presented it, your delivery was like, "We should read my translation."

**Ryan:** I was kidding.

**Selena:** And I'm like, "Well, that doesn't sound-

**Ryan:** It's not quite there yet.

**Selena:** ...that doesn't sound good."

**Ryan:** Point is, I've been able to kind of see under the hood some of these words. It's really cool to see James and how he's unpacking the point that he's making. And it makes me ask this question, like, what is he doing? Because this to me feels like it's an outside-in sort of approach. That sits well with the rest of James. Because James is the guy that says, you know, "Show me your faith without works and I'll show you my faith by what I do." In other words, faith without works is dead, is what James says.

And many would read that and they'd say, "It's against all the Pauline grace theology we've been given. It's against what we have come to know and appreciate as, you know, people saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And James is saying, also works.

And really what James is getting at is that if your faith is genuine, you know, the works will follow. The works didn't instantiate the faith. The faith was given by gift of the Holy Spirit. But if that faith is genuine, it will have to have these works. But then here he's talking about the tongue. And he's not saying, "Hey, if your faith is good, then your tongue should be good, too." He's just basically saying, like, Don't let your tongue set your world ablaze.

**Selena:** Which it sounds like... You know, he's talking to, obviously the believer, but he says, "With it we bless our Lord, and then with that, we also curse our neighbor who is made in the image of God." I mean, we see that all the time across social media. Christians and non-Christians alike, it's... the tongue... I feel like he's just taking this part of us and he's saying, the tongue is untamable and it is dangerous. And you have to understand that even like the best believer-

**Ryan:** Needs to bridle.

**Selena:** ...still needs to bridle his tongue, right? Even best believer. You know what I mean. We wanna try and live the most faithful, trying to be obedient, trying to just live out what the Lord has instructed, right? We're all striving for that, not out from a place of salvation and being saved. But as a place of I've been loved and saved and I want to glorify God because I've been loved and saved by Him.

**Ryan:** And the point that he's making is not "just don't say uncomfortable things." He's saying we don't curse people with the same tongue that we bless God with, because we can't curse those people because they're made in His image. And by cursing I don't mean like cursing a spell or something like that but instead, you know, reviling or in any way, just going against what the gospel would inform us to do.

That can be so easy to do online because we... This is not to be confused with speaking the truth in love. Because you can go online... I've gotten tore apart by people who don't share our Christian worldview by simply just quoting verses. And I'm not attacking them personally—they are image bearers—but I'm attacking their ideas with scripture, and they don't like it. And that's not what James is talking about here.

I want to contrast this a little bit with Matthew. When Jesus spoke in Matthew 12:33 and following he said, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good." Remember, James is doing an outside-in approach. And here we'll see Jesus is going from the inside out. So if it's good, then it should bear good fruit. What's in your heart overflows through your mouth.

And he says this, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers!" he's speaking to Pharisees, "How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil."

So those two things... what James is saying is what Jesus is saying, which by the way they were brothers. So it wasn't like they're opposing one another.

**Selena:** Right. They are in a family-

**Ryan:** But they're complementary images of one another. And James is coming from the standpoint of like, Listen, you say you're a believer. This is what now you need to do with your tongue from the outside in. *[Selena chuckles]* Jesus is saying, "You say you're a believer, but what's coming out of your mouth doesn't look like you're a believer. Therefore, you should have a red flag in your heart that says "maybe I don't actually believe what I say I believe."

**Selena:** It's problem with the source.

**Ryan:** So there's both this just buckle it down, bridle it at the source of your tongue. But there's also this if it is going off the rails, and you are unable to bridle it in a way that is representative of a sanctified soul... soul being sanctified, then as Jesus would say, that's an indicator of what's happening in your heart.

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** So they're not opposing messages, but they're complementary messages. So what are some examples of a tongue that would set a household ablaze? I

couldn't help but think of, again, we mentioned this early on, but a wife. We've said this before. [00:10:00] A wife has access to her husband's heart unlike anyone else. And the same can be said about a husband accessing his wife's heart.

When we were young, when we were first married, we moved to Switzerland. I had to have open heart surgery. As part of that open heart surgery, they connected wires up over my clavicle, and you can't see this if you're not watching on YouTube, but it went through my skin here, and the wires went under the skin up and over my collarbone and down to touch the various synapse points of my heart.

**Selena:** And the wires were tied to the outside of it.

**Ryan:** Which didn't do me any favors on the whole scar. I got some really gnarly scars here. People are looking at me funny whenever I'm swimming. And they were tied off like shoelaces, like these metal wires. And I'm looking down, you know, I feel a little bit out of sorts. And I remember at any point I said, "What are these for?" And they said, "Well, if your heart decides to stop or it beats irregularly, at any point, we can hook you up to a pacemaker and we can basically-

**Selena:** Reset.

**Ryan:** ...reset your heart. And that way we can save your life. And I thought, "You could also fry my heart, hook those things up to a car battery. My heart wouldn't like that too much."

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** In the same way, your words are like those wires into your spouse's heart. And you can either use those wires, those words to bring life when your spouse's heart is palpitating, so to speak, where they are feeling aimless, hopeless, peaceless. Peaceless? Is that a word? Without peace.

**Selena:** Lack of peace?

**Ryan:** Anxious. You can either pour gas on that fire, or you can pour water on that fire. And James is saying that the tongue itself can start to fire.

**Selena:** Right. And I think that, you know, not every wife tends to be the verbal processor that we're all categorized as. But whoever is more of a verbal processor might need to take heed of the words that James is saying here because I think it's so much easier to complain if you process things a little

more verbally. And as a wife, I think that is something that we tend to battle being wives. I know men complain. They complain differently. Yeah, they just complain. We all complain right about-

**Ryan:** I can fall into ruts where I'm complaining.

**Selena:** Yes. And we're ungrateful, we're just a constant drip right to our husband and he would rather just go live on the corner of a roof than with... you know what the proverb says.

**Ryan:** Than a naggy wife. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** Than with a naggy wife. That's the holy term right there.

**Ryan:** Can I share from us because you're a verbal processor, and you will oftentimes-

**Selena:** I don't feel like I'm as much of a verbal processor.

**Ryan:** No you're more of a stream-of-consciousness sort of person.

**Selena:** Sometimes because I feel safe with you. But that's not more.

**Ryan:** You will go about your day and you're like, "Oh, I need to get cream and cheese or something at the store. Oh, I need to feed the chickens. Oh, I need to..." *[Selena laughs]* And I'm just like, "Do I need to be part of any of this at any point?" Because you're just staying... do you not like that you have to do these things or-

**Selena:** Okay, but he doesn't finish sentences. So if you want to talk about-

**Ryan:** Of course, I do.

**Selena:** No. There are things you're like-

**Ryan:** Let's finish them a lot later. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** And even our miscommunication, like the mishaps that we have, I feel like are because either of course I didn't hear correctly, or he didn't complete his thoughts on what we were actually doing.

**Ryan:** The tongue is fire, Selena. I don't want to start any fires.

**Selena:** So you just stop in the middle.

- Ryan:** But you can't start a fire if you're not *[laughs]* throwing the matches out there. *[Selena chuckles]* So the wife who has a very cutting tongue... A husband can have a cutting tone as well.
- Selena:** Absolutely. Absolutely.
- Ryan:** The example of this would be a husband who is dismissive with his words.
- Selena:** Or overly critical.
- Ryan:** Overly critical. Husbands, if you're listening to this, watching this, I'm finishing up a book, Selena is finishing up the wives' counterpart of this book, but they're communication books. Just to be candid, I'm trying to find the balance between sharing honest truth without losing credibility. Because growing up in our marriage, I should say, growing up in our marriage, there were times when I would use speech to be dismissive. And it's not like you were thinking, "Oh, man, he's just dismissing me right now." It's just you would feel invalidated. And it's not like I'm being malicious. It's just I didn't understand what I was doing.
- Selena:** You didn't know how to communicate well. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And so I talk a lot about how, like, "Hey, young husband, you know, whoever is reading the communication book, know that this is a power that you can have, and you need to be very careful with it." And this is an accident or a mistake I made. This is something that we dealt with a lot is being dismissive. Me being dismissive with my words. And I never was degrading or demeaning to you. Like I would never say, "Selena, you're such this."
- Selena:** No. You were critical, though. You are a little more critical, I think, at least. But also I can tend to be overly sensitive about hearing anything critical, why lie? *[laughs]* Because I was not raised in a healthy like... I didn't have that ability to separate the criticalness from who I am, like my identity. We can get critiques from our husband or spouse, but it doesn't invalidate who we are in Christ and who we are. [00:15:00] It shouldn't anyways. If it's a true, holy concern, it shouldn't nail knocks off the rails.
- Ryan:** And just to be clear, we're... It wasn't years and years that this is all it was.
- Selena:** No, no, no.
- Ryan:** We'd have conversations-



**Selena:** We were just learning.

**Ryan:** ...that were elevated in their attention, and it would come out as being critical or dismissive or whatever. And it goes both ways.

**Selena:** Yeah, we had to learn and grow in these areas. I mean, we talked about lazy communication when you're kind of unintentionally... You're not trying to be hurtful, but you're just not really even putting any effort into how you're talking to your spouse or valuing them in the way.

**Ryan:** There's kind of the communication stuff you do on accident, which I feel like no matter who you are, you're gonna fall into that at some point. You're gonna say things unintentionally, you're gonna miscommunicate-

**Selena:** Thank the Lord for repentance.

**Ryan:** ...and it will start fires. And it's up to you to put the fires out and to the Lord's repentance and to repent to one another. But then there's the words that we might use that are intentional. We would categorize those as verbal abuse. So verbal abuse is real. Manipulation falls under this. We've talked about that in the past. Some of what we're going to say will touch on the previous things. Manipulation, I don't know categories or common manipulation tactics. Look that up on [fiercemarriage.com](http://fiercemarriage.com), if you want to listen to that or read all about that.

So there's a website. It's called One Love. It's a nonprofit. Their whole thing is educating young adults in what a healthy relationship looks like. Because tragically one of the founder's daughters, three weeks before graduating college was in her apartment and her ex-boyfriend came in, and basically just beat her to death. And that's very tragic. So they started this nonprofit to show people how to live in healthy relationships-

**Selena:** And how to recognize abuse.

**Ryan:** I don't see signs of this being a faith-based nonprofit at all. Not to say that they don't maybe have, you know, a faith of their own, but I think it's good. Again, [joinonlove.org](http://joinonlove.org). This article is there if you want to read it. But this is 11 Common Patterns of Verbal Abuse. So we're just gonna go through their list because I feel like it was a helpful list.

**Selena:** Super helpful.

**Ryan:** The first one, verbal abuse: using your tongue as the fire. Using your tongue for cursing, right? And as scripture, the other translation is I found out as I was

reading through it in Greek is it came the same spring and it come bitter water or saltwater, and also freshwater or sweet water. And so all of these are going to be under the bitter water category.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And let's talk about the sweet water counterparts.

**Selena:** I agree. I agree.

**Ryan:** So bitter versus sweet. Number one name calling. An example of that is "You idiot, now you've made me angry. I don't know if I've ever said that to you."

**Selena:** As you listen, you'll probably see more of your tendencies or less. But I think it's good to be aware of. I mean, if you're around other couples, too, and you see some of these patterns playing out, it's good to ask them questions, right? So name-calling is never constructive at all.

**Ryan:** And wouldn't be that overt. You could say, "Man, you're such an airhead" or "You're such a ditz" or "You're so lazy. You're such a lazy, whatever." *[Selena laughs]* I'm talking to the husband.

**Selena:** Gotcha.

**Ryan:** What's the Sweet water counterpart to this name-calling? Blessing your spouse.

**Selena:** Yes, encouraging your spouse.

**Ryan:** "You are wonderful. You are beautiful. I love you."

**Selena:** "Thank you for working hard and providing for us. Thank you for your integrity and the relationship, at work. Thank you for your honesty and your transparency."

**Ryan:** This is another episode. But what if your husband is not honest? What if he doesn't have integrity?

**Selena:** You can't lie to him.

**Ryan:** What if he's lazy truly?

**Selena:** You can't lie.

**Ryan:** There's a way to not be a name caller but also call them out out of that into truth.

**Selena:** Name-calling versus calling out. That's good.

**Ryan:** Number two: condescension. Here's an example. Oh, my goodness. So this examples were cringy but I'm just gonna read it because it had- *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** My eyebrows went straight up after he said this. *[chuckles]* The example of condescension is this. "No wonder you are always moaning about your weight, look how clean your plate is!"

**Selena:** It's terrible example. It's terrible.

**Ryan:** If you've ever said anything like that to your spouse, slap yourself in the face and go repent to your spouse.

**Selena:** I mean, this is the whole sarcastic-

**Ryan:** Belittling.

**Selena:** Yeah, your spouse is the butt of the joke. What did we say? Sarcasm is the like lowest form of communication. Sarcastic remarks have not really been a part of our marriage.

**Ryan:** It just feels gross.

**Selena:** It does. *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** Sarcasm feels gross.

**Selena:** It does. It does. But if that's your kind of your default or you're comfortable in how you communicate, like have you ever asked your spouse if that felt like being communicated to in that way? I mean, it's just something to think about.

**Ryan:** So instead of being condescending and belittling, the sweet water version of this would be what?

**Selena:** Again, encouragement. [00:20:00] Joking with them and not making them the butt of the joke, right?

**Ryan:** Okay, number three. We have to go quickly through these. Manipulation.

**Selena:** We got a whole episode on that.

- Ryan:** This example is fired because it's so true.
- Selena:** It is.
- Ryan:** And I feel like people do it without knowing it.
- Selena:** It's super subtle.
- Ryan:** "If you really loved me you wouldn't say or do that. If you really love me, you wouldn't do that."
- Selena:** "If you really loved me, you would do that."
- Ryan:** Oh.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Again, starting to fire with that tongue. Because now you've heaped on them maybe a definition of love that is not biblical.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Like, you better be on the right track. If they're not loving you well, then don't say, "If you really love me, you would do that." That's totally manipulative. You can say, "I don't feel loved by you when you do this." That can be this straight shooting. That's clear, not manipulative.
- Selena:** All right, number four: criticism. Again, we did talk about this earlier, that it's okay to have, I think, some constructive criticism or a concern about your walk with the Lord or some actual concern for a spouse, right? But if you're constantly just belittling them or criticizing them, you're just hurting their self-esteem. So an example is, "Why are you so disorganized? I can always count on you to ruin our nights out!" *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** So, criticism, I think, is marked by a lack of advancing the character trait that you're criticizing. Instead of me saying, "Hey, can we talk about this? We're running late. You're just organized an awful lot. Can I help you?" or "What is the reason for that?" or "What is going on in your heart and mind?"
- Selena:** "Can we dive into this together and figure out why we're always late?"
- Ryan:** "Let's work it out instead of me just observing and critiquing a flaw."

- Selena:** Yes, I agree. As a spouse too, like you said, I think not just "you" statement. I think if you want to ease into those conversations, you can say, "I feel like we are always running late. We feel a bit disorganized when we're getting out the door. It seems consistent. Is something that I can do to like make this better?" And I think it just kind of opens the door a little bit more gently then.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Because you're trying to actually move the needle in your life and not just point out flaws.
- Selena:** Right. And I think that would be the sweet water, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah. All right, number five: demeaning comments. This is another form of setting your relationship ablaze through the power of the tongue. Demeaning comments. I can't read one of them because it's overtly racist. *[chuckles]* I don't know. I'll read the second one. It says, "You women, you're always crying stupid tears for nothing." Right? Imagine that! Like your wife is crying-
- Selena:** And you're just a stone wall.
- Ryan:** ..."You women, you always cry stupid tears." So you're demeaning her because... You can say the same thing to a husband. "You men, always crying stupid tears." *[both chuckles]* Or like, "You men are all the same." "You're all the same. You just want sex," or "You just want whatever."
- Selena:** Demeaning. So you're-
- Ryan:** You're demeaning a trait of their identity. Which being a woman is part of your identity, being a man is part of my identity. It's not my primary ultimate identity. That's in Christ. But the point is, is like I've now not just demeaned you as my wife, but now you as a woman.
- Selena:** And as an image bearer of God. It's doing right what James 3 is talking about?
- Ryan:** Now men and wives, if you call yourself Christian, these things are... you're doing what James is warning against. If you're blessing the Lord, you're saying I'm a Christian, I have trust in the Lord, by the way, I'm going to *[inaudible]* curse, revile the one made in your image.
- Selena:** These are all things that need to be dealt with in terms of you need to repent, you need to bring it to the cross, and you need to repent to your spouse. And you need to not just stop at repentance, because if it's true repentance, then it will lead to change, right? So it's not just "I'm sorry, I did this again," and then you just do it again. Although as believers, we are supposed to have that forgiveness, that level of forgiveness all the time.

**Ryan:** I feel like James is addressing... like he's putting a band aid on the wound, and Jesus is saying, "Get the heart. And let me be the one to get your heart right." James is saying to stop the bleeding. Like, don't say these things simply because they will set your house ablaze. If you have the urge to say these things, go to Christ. Let Him transform your heart.

Number six: threats.

**Selena:** Yeah, another pattern of verbal abuse. They say it could be easy to recognize, but sometimes people dress it up in ways that aren't so bad. So an example is, "I will hurt myself if you leave me tonight" or "If you don't do that you might find that your cat spends the night outdoors!"

So threatening your spouse or threatening something that they value to try to get your way not only is it childish, but it's also very hurtful. The sweet water to this would just be no threats and to actually deal with whatever the conflict is. If you're feeling threatened or you're feeling something that you don't understand, bring it to your spouse and talk to them about it. Have a conversation, ask questions. [00:25:00]

**Ryan:** If a covenant is strong enough to deal with this stuff, you don't have to play emotional verbal chess that's manipulative. You can just talk to one another.

Number seven: blame. Example is "You are the reason why we are never on time for anything!" or "Look what you made me do now!"

**Selena:** This sounds like our 2-year-old. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** She is the... She will...

**Selena:** Maybe even our 6-year-old.

**Ryan:** She will disobey multiple times in a row and then be mad at us because we put her in time out. Like, "Why could you do this to me? Look what you made me do."

**Selena:** Right. But when you're in a relationship and there is some affection there, it can be hard to see how blame... or you're a newly married couple and like blame just... "Okay, well, maybe I am. Maybe I did do that and I'm causing this. Maybe I am." Be, I think, cautious. Be discerning. Have the conversations before you point out the blame. That would be I think the sweet water is just... Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to even put the blame on anyone outside of yourself.

**Ryan:** And the practice here is seeing things accurately. That's what the Bible says. That the Lord detests uneven measures. Like things that are claiming to be true, which are not true. So we need to have our eyes open, being able to detect truth and see things clearly. And doing so will eliminate the blame game. Because I don't have to, I can express my frustration without attributing all of it to you because there's inevitably gonna be part of it. That's both of ours to bear.

**Selena:** Absolutely.

**Ryan:** And so you have to find a way to let that frustration either let it go or let it come out in a way that's not going to be hurtful and... the frustration come out but communicate the frustration. All right, a few more of these. Number eight is accusations. As an example, "I bet you are cheating on me!" or "I saw you had fun flirting with your boss again, while I was stuck chatting to your boring coworkers." *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** Well, and what's the difference between accusations and blame? They say that it often stems from like severe jealousy. And then the repeated accusations are a form of verbal abuse, just being constantly accused of something constantly.

**Ryan:** Here's the trick, though. I'm gonna jump in. Because you have maybe a husband who has not proven himself perfect.

**Selena:** Sure. Sure.

**Ryan:** Whether he's been caught in some sort of sexual sin or lust or pornography or you know, looking at other women, or even God forbid, an affair, physical, emotional, either or, and say he's trying to rebuild trust, and you've got maybe five years of rebuilding behind you. Whatever happened happened, you've reconciled, you've rebuilt.

Now I can see... it could be husband or wife, but the spouse who was the victim, if they're not careful, they could be making accusations. Like, "I bet you're cheating on me again. Let me see your computer. Let me see. I bet you're looking at pornography."

**Selena:** Right. And that's the-

**Ryan:** No matter how hard that spouse tries to fight through that, they're always feeling like it's undermining their ability to feel like they can actually trust back.

**Selena:** Well, I think, again, the sweet water here is not just accusing, not just stopping with the problem, but actually asking questions before so that you're understanding what the actual problem is. Maybe something's triggered you to feel that your spouse is cheating. So instead of accusing, again, going to them, humbly going to them in love, being self-controlled with our tongue and saying, "I'm having these feelings again, I'm feeling triggered by whatever. Can we talk about this?" That would show I think the growth that a couple has gone through in terms of rebuilding trust.

**Ryan:** It's good. Let's move through these quickly. There's three more. Withholding. Withholding. Here's an example. "You are discussing restaurant options and don't want to go with your partner's preference. They leave the room and refuse to talk to you until you apologize for being 'mean'" So they're basically withholding themselves from you because they want to get what they want from you.

**Selena:** Right, right.

**Ryan:** We talked about this in the manipulation side. Go to [fiercemarriage.com](http://fiercemarriage.com) There's a search feature there. Search for manipulation tactics or manipulation. We'll have a full episode on that. Some of them have transcripts. Talking about that there.

This next one is gaslighting. We have a whole episode on gaslight.

**Selena:** We did a whole communication series.

**Ryan:** So search for "fierce marriage, gaslighting," whether on our website or on Google. You'll find that. Here's an example of gaslighting is "Why are you always so sensitive to everything?" Why are you always so sensitive to everything?

**Selena:** It's a way of making somebody feel isolated or unable to kind of express their feelings. You're just discounting them, you're invalidating them.

**Ryan:** A final way that the tongue can be a fire in a marriage is through circular arguments. This one's interesting. But basically [00:30:00] people on the receiving end of these types of disagreements tend to feel like they're walking on eggshells in order to avoid going back to the same argument again and again. This is what happens when you fail to forgive, when you fail to walk in full light of the grace, the fact that you've been forgiven in Christ, and you are now privileged and called to forgive others, as you've been forgiven in Christ.



Biblical marriage says Christ has not held my sin against me. So how can I possibly hold your sin against you? Now circular arguments will happen if you've not dealt with that.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** If you've not either had repentance and forgiveness or you've tried to sweep it under the rug, and bitterness is taking root and it's festering. So the key there, run to Christ. And that's where we're gonna end this episode today is, friends, if any of these things set off lightbulbs in your head or flags in your heart, says, "I need to work on that," we're gonna say, you can't do it on your own. We can't do it on our own. We need help. We need help.

And we have help that we need abundantly in Christ. And it looks like this. You put your faith in Him, trust Him to be the savior of your soul, the one who lived a perfect life that you couldn't live and died the death you should have died, rose again ascended into heaven so that he might reign on the throne where He reigns to this day. And He's calling His own unto Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom He sent to illumine His word and to enact salvation in our hearts through our faith in Him. Place your faith in Christ.

If you want to learn more about what that means, go to [thenewsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com). We have a website set up for you. We'd love to invite you into the family of God.

**Selena:** And one more just caveat here. If some of these things are really just hitting you hard and you feel like you are in a verbally abusive relationship, then we would encourage you to seek help outside of your own marriage. So seek help from a pastor, from a guide couple, which is someone who loves the Lord, loves you all, and knows you all, and wants to get you back on track with Christ and with loving one another well. Again, get a Bible-believing counselor.

And obviously, if the abuse is severe, get out and get help. Call 911. You know, take care of yourself and work through that. And you don't have to do that alone. So just that last bit of encouragement there.

**Ryan:** It's good. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for your word that is so instructive in our hearts and it's so timeless. It's timely and timeless in our hearts and minds. I pray that it would bear its full goodness and weight on our hearts and transform our hearts, that we might not be as Jesus said, living out, letting our faith not spill out into our lives. Instead of our heart being rotten, I pray that our heart be made new. Take our heart of stone, make it into heart of flesh, that we might live out this faith. And that starts with how we love you, how we love one another, and the words we use and the actions we do.

Lord, I pray for the husbands and wives struggling, that you would be their hope, be their peace, sustain them, set their feet on solid ground. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, friends, if you're watching this on YouTube, thank you. Please hit that subscribe button. We really appreciate this. Hit the like button. If you're listening on the podcast, go to YouTube. We're trying to build up our YouTube audience because we love the channel. I think that's going to be potential for the future ministry that we're building here... that God's building rather.

If you want to partner with us as we continue to do this work, by the grace of God, we're going to continue going but we need people like you who are like-minded, go to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner). And we would be honored to have your partnership there. So that's it for the Fierce Marriage Podcast this week. This episode is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** See you again in seven days. Until next time—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **Referenced scripture**
  - James 3:1-12
  - Matthew 12:33-35
  
- **Recommended resource**
  - [thenewsisgood.com](https://thenewsisgood.com)

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