

BUILDING BIBLICAL LITERACY IN THE HOME

<https://fiercemarriage.com/building-biblical-literacy-in-the-home>

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Ryan: Ladies and gentlemen, if you've been following us for any period of time, I hope that this would ring true. We don't generally fit most, I think, marriage ministry categories. And what I mean by that is, we're not afraid to talk about, you know, five ways to do this, that, or the other or improve.

We really tried to get down to the core of what it takes to build a marriage that is truly centered on Christ. It's not just a marriage full of gimmicks and tricks or things that we're trying, but really getting down to what are the core motivations of the human heart, and how does that affect how I love my wife, and how the wife would love her husband?

So today we're going to really get to what we believe to be one of the most core issues of a marriage. In fact, we've dubbed it the 800-pound gorilla in the room, Bible literacy. *[both laughs]* So we're gonna talk about that today. And we hope that you'll stick around because I strongly believe that if you've internalized some of this stuff that it will revolutionize. It has the potential of revolutionizing how you approach scripture, and therefore, it'll revolutionize your whole life. So that's a bold claim. But here we are making it. So see you on the other side.

[00:01:13] <music>

Selena: I think you can make bold claims when it's not resting on you, right?

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: The word of God is powerful. It's the word of God that transforms and revolutionizes.

Ryan: Okay, so if we managed to somehow get folks to approach the Word of God more-

Selena: Consistently, deeply.

Ryan: ...consistently, more deeply, more truly, then, yeah, I think the word of God will do what the Word of God does.

Selena: Yes. Amen

Ryan: If we managed to do that.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So that's our prayer that we will do that. So I will start with this verse. "Man does not live on bread alone but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." That's Matthew 4:4. Jesus said that when He was in the desert being tempted by Satan. That was His ammo when Satan said, "Hey, you're hungry? Here, make yourself some bread or whatever. Just make it happen." And Jesus says, "Man does not live on bread alone but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

That wasn't just a pithy way for Jesus to refuse the temptations of the enemy. He was stating something true about the very nature of what sustains us.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: So often we try to go through life with a low-grade spiritual starvation, and we don't even realize it. So here we are talking about that today. So if you're not familiar who we are, we are the Fierce Family or Fierce Marriage. We have another podcast, Fierce parenting. You'll see both of those on our YouTube channel, if you haven't checked out that podcast. My name is Ryan. This is my lovely wife Selena. We are the Fredericks. We been married 19 years. It feels like yesterday walking you down-

Selena: It feels like yesterday.

Ryan: I didn't walk you down the aisle.

Selena: No.

Ryan: I walked you back down the aisle after you met me at the altar. *[Selena laughs]* It feels like yesterday. We were just babies. Here we are. God has been gracious. We pray that our content helps you. If you want to quickly just kind of get up to speed with who you are, go to our website, fiercemarriage.com. We have a lot of articles, a lot of resources. We've written a number of books. And we've talked about those in the past. So let's just dive right into this.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Why is this so important, Selena? I mean, this is-

Selena: What is "this"? What is the grill? I don't know if we've actually named it.

- Ryan:** I did mentioned Bible literacy.
- Selena:** Oh, you did.
- Ryan:** We said the 800-pound gorilla was Bible literacy. It's not Carol this time around [*Selena laughs*] for your Office fans.
- Selena:** I missed that.
- Ryan:** So what is Bible literacy and why is it so important? We're going to warn you because if you're watching this, listening to this, I'm just gonna say, if you're a nominal Christian, and what I mean by that is if you are Christian mostly just by association, this will hopefully encourage you and not discharge you, but also challenge you. Because we've been there and that we're gonna talk about that a little bit here.
- So I've asked you this question and I've not given you a chance to answer it. So Selena, what is Bible literacy? And why is it so important?
- Selena:** I think simply put, Bible literacy is being able to read the Bible, understand its context, and submit to its authority in our lives. So being able to read, understand clearly what the Bible says, not just kind of open and drop your Bible and take out one verse that sounds good and that's your daily devotions. It really is the mark of a Christian life is being in God's word, knowing God's word, learning about God's word more, I think, than just on a Sunday or in a community group.
- Ryan:** Yeah, that's good. I would liken it to the ability... If you're hungry, you have a number of choices, right?
- Selena:** There you go. [00:05:00]
- Ryan:** You can go-
- Selena:** Get some chicken nuggets?
- Ryan:** Okay, you can go get the processed chicken nuggets. Like someone else has raised that chicken, someone else has slayed the chicken and someone else has process that into a format that you can eat very easily, very convenient, in some ways, you know, tastes better maybe.
- Or, you know, if you really want to be self-sufficient, which in this case, I think it's healthy to want self-sufficiency in terms of being able to approach your Bible and understand it, you might compare that somebody who's able to go

out, hunt for the food, you know... I don't know the term. Skin the food, dress the food, whatever, [Selena chuckles] cook it, prepare it, not in that order, [laughs] and then eat it.

So basically can we wean ourselves off of the spiritual milk like Paul talks about and onto herding your meals, without having to have it fed to us? Now, that doesn't mean that we are to just consume the scriptures in a vacuum. That's why we have teachers, that's why we have preachers. However, we should be comfortable approaching the Scripture, asking questions of the Scriptures and wrestling with it, and coming out of that experience with something that's true.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: So, yeah, to be able to read Scripture, to understand it in its context and submit our lives to its authority. Now, last piece, submitting our lives to its authority, that's the work of the Holy Spirit in us, you know, softening our hearts. Selena, you said this. You said "by knowing our Bible, we know God."

Selena: Right. It's not just about knowledge. It's not just about knowing God. Yes, we want to know about Him, we want to understand His character and His promises. We can only do that through going to the Scriptures. But if we don't go to the scriptures, we're not just missing out on knowledge, we're missing out on knowing who God is.

I think so often, and we'll talk about more kind of what the problem is today, why there's such a lack of biblical literacy in our day and age because it's... we just often approach it, like you said, it was like a roulette table. Like, "Hey, we're gonna spin it and see what's in it for me today."

Ryan: Oh man, I've done that.

Selena: Right. We've all been guilty of it.

Ryan: Or you just want to find some morsel of "God loves me" or "I have hope".
[laughs]

Selena: And honestly, the thing that has changed it for me, because you know, devotions kind of felt a bit like a drag after a while. Because when you use that approach, it really is based on you. It's based on what you want. I mean, dare I say it's a selfish approach to the Bible.

I think it is good to want to know God. It's good to want to be intimate and to understand His character, again, and His promises but it's not just so I can feel

good and I can feel secure about who I am as a Christian. Yeah, that's a piece of it. But it's about me knowing God today, yesterday, and looking forward to Him in the future. It's about me understanding the character of God in the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfilled all these promises and all of these prophecies and everything that was to come. Like, it is just line upon line, precept upon precept. But you can't get that big picture and then... It deepens your hunger. Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: I got into a Bible plan and I read the Bible through. I think I've almost gone through it twice now. Which is I feel silly for saying because we've been Christians like our whole lives and I never read the Bible cover-to-cover or reading plan where it covers the entire Bible.

I think that was one of the big changes for me was that when I actually read it in bulk and read it like literally, I was more educated on it than I was, you know, reading it in little pieces at a time. And so-

Ryan: It's good. And we'll get there. So today we're going to talk through three ways you can read scripture as a couple, I guess three ways to approach how you read Scripture, and then we'll give you some really tangible ways to build Bible literacy rhythms and habits into your own marriage.

So I do want to kind of round this out because I think the biggest issue with Bible literacy, and you touched on it, is we are selfish in how we approach scripture. We're including ourselves in this. We tend to be really selfish. In other words, we approach the scriptures subjectively and we approach them on our terms. We are looking for something to confirm what we already hold dear as opposed to going to Scripture and letting it splay us open and show us the truth of God for better or worse, on however, they fall on our sinful hearts. They need to bear their weight on us.

I think I would simply define Bible literacy as this: as being able to read and understand scripture on its terms. [00:10:00] On its own terms. So not doing that I think is reminiscent or I think the result of our individualistic culture. So, individualism is kind of one of these big boogeyman in the room, right?

So individualism comes with two definitions. I looked this up. There is a social theory definition, which is individualism is a social theory favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control. That doesn't sound so bad. I do believe that that's a good thing. We should be responsible for our own individual actions. We should be free to act as individuals within the

bounds of the law without being under state control, obviously, aside from the laws that the state we voted on.

The second one. Now, this is where it gets a little bit more insidious is the individualism is the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant. So as a social theory, it's great. But as a lifestyle, individualism is not great. It was started as a great way to delineate the boundaries of state control but now it's become the norm for every sphere of our life. And I think this includes how we approach scripture.

In other words, we don't interpret it in light of itself. We don't necessarily interpret it in light of church history or in terms of, you know, what we're talking about, being self-sustaining when you approach scripture, and that you're able to go and mined for the goodness. But we don't do it-

Selena: You're not afraid to.

Ryan: You don't do that in a vacuum is what I'm trying to say.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We have another headline. Should we talk about why we have failed in our past, how we've had we failed to build biblical literacy in our own marriage?

Selena: It can be. I mean, I think that by virtue of doing Fierce Marriage that has really been a driver for us in knowing God's word. But we don't want to just pursue God's word to bring you a podcast or a YouTube episode, right? We're here to, again, share what is an overflow of what's already happening ideally in our own hearts, for better for worse. The struggles, again, is plain, is open. It's saying "this area needs work" and here, the Holy Spirit is going to be there with you working with you, equipping you to overcome these things.

But I think generally speaking, like in our discussion earlier, you were saying that Christianity has become more of just kind of like a lifestyle choice. So, again, we see this battle of like authority. It's just kind of something I do or we do. We go to church, we read our Bibles. We're just Christians—that's what we do.

Instead of, like, the Bible is the ultimate truth. There is nothing that can compete or make it lesser than it is. It is the truth. There is no other truth. It's not just a devotional. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of

the heart." What other book does this? *[chuckles]* What other book is alive and does this?

So we fail it when we don't believe these things in it or we don't know these things in it. I mean, if we aren't in it, we may not know this is... God's word is ultimate. It's not something you compromise. It's not like, "Okay, I'm gonna read my devotional today, my Bible tomorrow." It's like, "No, you're always in your Bible." Is it Spurgeon who says... Who says like, "Visit..." Or maybe it's Piper. "Visit many good books but live in your Bible."

Ryan: It's Spurgeon.

Selena: I mean, we need to live as we were created to live. And that is being in God's word, not living by bread alone, but by living on every word of God. And we've just failed to do that I think on so many levels.

Ryan: Well, that's because I think we don't value it as what it is. Another reason we don't see it as relevant.

Selena: Well, there's far more interesting things, arguably that can distract us away and distract our lives away entirely if we're not careful.

Ryan: So the encouragement here is to—I guess, if you need it. At times we need it. And so we thought, let's talk about this—is to reboot the desire to go deep into God's word as an individual, but as a couple. And to do so well. I mean, we can read and read and read and that has value, but there is a sense in which we need to read correctly.

And that's not to overcomplicate it. It's just a read with our believer's eyes onto, to trust this as the word of God as it is. Because when we read Scripture as anything other than authoritative on us, we are devaluing the Word of God Himself. When we read it subjectively, we're not saying it's God's words, we're saying it's our words with God's ideas kind of interlaced into what we already know and believe and want to hold dear. That's when you read our own meanings into Scripture. And we'll have an example of this toward the end.
[00:15:00]

But what we want to do is give you... Now, I guess there are... What do I have? Three ways to approach scripture. So here's the question. How do we build Bible literacy in marriage? First off, in all things unity. So ideally you do this together. We have so many wives watching, listening to this and they say, you know, "I'd love to do this but my husband's not on board." And I've seen husbands will say the same thing.

So ideally the best place to start to build it in your marriage is to do this in unity, to decide on a plan together. Now with that said, if you can't decide on a plan together, still you can decide to lead the charge. Whether you're the husband or the wife, you can decide to say, "This is something that I'm going to value and I'm going to do in my own personal life," praying and hoping that it ends up becoming a joint thing.

And with that, I would say pray. Pray that the Lord buds in you, wells up from within you a deep hunger as if you're hungry for physical food, hunger for His spiritual food.

Selena: Right. I think that's probably one of the biggest battles we face as believers is just everything is provided for us. We have no lack. And so to understand hunger, to understand things that might make us feel uncomfortable or it might be hard or challenging, it doesn't take much, right? *[chuckles]*

So I would say like, "Yes, God, stir within us a deep hunger for your word." And even if you don't feel that the first week or so that you're reading, keep reading, keep going at it, keep diving in, commit to it because it really is within that commitment, that long-term commitment of day in and day out that you start to ask questions, you start processing verses and scripture in different ways. Your heart starts wrestling with certain things and you want to know the answers. And before you know it you've got your systematic theology book out, you've got your Bible out, you've got, you know, people on YouTube, you're trying to type in verses and trying to understand, I Got Questions, you know? I think that's all good because we have so many resources. Like we are more equipped to understand the Bible than ever before.

Ryan: Yeah. Yeah. So in all things unity, pray and go in with eyes wide open. "God, what are you going to do?" Knowing that we do have a lot of these resources at our fingertips. So here's the first step in that: read the Bible. This might sound silly, but we need to read the Bible. But not only that but on a plan. Any goal that's worth acquiring or worth pursuing is going to be worth setting a plan to get there.

Selena: I'm your biggest person that does not like plans. I'll just tell you that right now. I always feel like...

Ryan: I could never get Selena to set goals because she's like, "I'm just gonna ruin it anyway."

Selena: I'm like, "Can I just live day to day and just not... just have day to day goals that I know that I can accomplish and then have a few extras?" But I will tell you that getting on a reading plan was life-changing. There's lots of reading plans

in your Bible, depending on which kind of Bible you have. We're going through a CSV, which is kind of neat to go through different translations. It has a reading plan for each book of the Bible, as well as a year-long reading plan too.

Ryan: Yeah, which actually leads me to the next piece. Because there's three different ways to read Scripture. And I would encourage you, if you can... Just by virtue of trying these things, you're gonna end up seeing that your devotional time is going to be blown out beyond the normal five or 10 minutes that maybe you might be used to. It might be closer to an hour just by necessity.

So three ways to read Scripture. I think there's seasons for each, if you can try to do them simultaneously. And they are these: breath, read for breath, then you read for depth, then you read for memorization.

Selena: Breath, depth-

Ryan: Here's homeschooling mom coming out. *[laughs]*

Selena: Well, because breath just the volume. You want to read for long passages of Scripture and understand the big stories and the big pictures of it. But you can only do that by reading chapters and chapters of Scripture.

Ryan: Me time. The kicker here is don't feel like you have to hover too far too long in one particular spot. You need to just get the narratives in you, get the art of scripture in you, get the character, stories and the events in you, knowing that you'll miss a lot of it, but you'll still catch 10%, 15% of it, and it will be there. That's okay.

Selena: You got a lifetime to go back and do it again.

Ryan: Yeah. It's not the last time you're going to read it. The second way is depth. So picking either a section of Scripture, a chapter, a book, or even doing a specific study. Like I've seen some do like a wisdom study or, you know, there'll be like a word study or topic study. Or you might do a study over the book of the Bible. And that's going to have more depth. That's incredible.

If you just do that... again personally, there's no hard and fast biblical mandate that says you have to read the way Ryan and Selena said. That's not what we're saying. But I've just found that if I read for depth and I leave the breath, I table that, I start to lose the overarching-

Selena: Those are deep things, I feel like. [00:20:00]

Ryan: But you can spend all your devotional time going deep and not spend any time keeping the breath, kind of-

Selena: I think the breath helps you go the depths as well-

Ryan: Sure.

Selena: ...because there's so much more to explore and understand. But like I have books, you know, on the shelf behind us that... There's a volume on Isaiah that is... I could probably spend the next year reading that book because the book of Isaiah is intense and there's a lot of scholarly kind of stuff that's been said around it.

And if I just read just that text, and I'm reading through the book of Isaiah for the next year, I'm not going to touch on the Gospels, I'm not going to touch on the epistles, I'm not going to hear about redemptive history. I'm just gonna get just that... I'm not gonna get the Psalm or the Proverbs. So I just feel like I start to lack and my diet becomes imbalanced at that point, which is why the breath keeps the balance in place in my mind.

And then obviously, most intuitively, I think, is the memorization piece. And that's just where you're being disciplined and saying, "I need..." It's not just I want. I need this so that it's so that I can pull it out whenever I need it to pick me up. That's part of it. We have a scriptural imperative that says "Lock the Word of God in your heart. Write it on the tablet of your heart."

Selena: And I would say an encouragement that I got from a friend when I was just feeling like... You know, we're pregnant again, we're gonna have baby in a couple months, and all that goes along with that. And so it's not like I can sit here and have my hour-long devotion. I've got three other kids that we're home-educating and doing our best to live on the path that God's given us faithfully.

And so a friend was just like, "You know, just read it when you can, and then maybe just sit and memorize a passage of scripture for the next month." So if I can only read one or two verses, then I'm going to read those over and over and I'm going to lock them in my heart. I'm going to go to them, you know, whenever I'm sitting, you know, feeding the baby, or whatever's happening.

There are seasons I think that we can go through if we're... If you're going through sickness, if you're going through just any sort of physical hard time, it's a great time to start memorizing Scripture and getting it in your heart. Not only is it good for your mind, but it really is good for your soul and your heart. It's encouragement. It'll uplift you. And it'll I think remind you of the strength-

Ryan: Do you do that alone? You say memorize-

Selena: No, I wouldn't say do it alone. But if you lack the time, I mean, memorization is probably one of the best ways to be concentrating on Scripture. It's a concentrated like... Not a lot of time, but I want to do it well.

Ryan: And of course, there's grace in all this. We're not saying that something in your life happens and you're unable to read Scripture then... God is not counting the amount of words you're reading every day. What we're saying is as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is we want to encourage you to drink deep the word of God because it is what it says it is. And that it is the sustaining life that we need here as Christ said. We live on the words of God that proceed from His mouth.

Selena: I think doing it with each other... I don't know if we're gonna talk to that.

Ryan: Well, yeah, it is a marriage podcast. So we are trying to see that marriage is valued as part of marital-

Selena: And this is one of the first times, if we're honest, that we're actually doing a reading plan together.

Ryan: We've done this in parts, but for the next nine months we're doing the same exact plan. And it's been great because we'll have reflections-

Selena: We talk about it in real-time. And I know exactly where he's at. Like, he's in Genesis or Psalm or whatever, John. And I know what he's reading and we're talking about it. I don't need the context of where it's at. I'm just like, "Yeah, totally, I had that question too."

Ryan: As we approach the text, we're encouraging you, pray, find unity, hunger for the Word of God. Read the Bible together, get a plan to do so. Read for breadth, depth, and memorization. That's the plan. So now as you approach the text, Selena, you mentioned questions. This is one of the my favorite things about reading scripture is you get to ask questions of the text. But to do so we must approach the text humbly.

I don't know all there is to know about the Word of God. I need it to be shown to me by the Holy Spirit. I need it to be shown to me by just going line by line and seeing it unfold before my eyes. And when we go humbly, we can now go objectively, and we can say, I'm not here just to get something from it and leave but I'm here to encounter God Himself in a way and to have Him tell me what to think.

Selena: By virtue of just being in His presence and undistracted and learning and watching and absorbing and focusing on who God is and who Christ is and His life that He lived, I think by virtue, we will begin to ask those questions, we will begin to desire Him more and more and want to... I think our hearts and our minds [00:25:00] will start processing it differently. We won't just be there to get... Yes, we will be fed-

Ryan: We do get fed.

Selena: But that's secondary I think to knowing God.

Ryan: Well, yeah.

Selena: Or it's an overflow, I would say, maybe, of knowing God.

Ryan: Sure. I mean, if that's the only reason we're going to Scripture, so be it. Like go to be fed next, so be it. Go drink deep of the well that is Christ, the living water that wells up from within you. We're sheep. The idea is that hopefully we would be in love with our shepherd in such a way that we just want to be with Him. We feel safe with Him. But also our shepherd feeds us and also our shepherd takes care of us.

But again, as you process that we ask you do so humbly, objectively, not subjectively. And we do so to ask questions of the text. So what do we mean by that? Very quickly, we ask what did the author intend? Okay, the author being under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is saying something to a specific end. It's not just whatever we get from it right then. That that's not-

Selena: What we think it.

Ryan: When it says that Scripture is alive and active, it doesn't mean it changes. It means that our hearts are constantly receiving it in different capacities. So what did the author intend when he wrote this? And part of that is, who is the audience? Who was Isaiah writing to? Who was Paul writing to?

Selena: Interestingly enough, if you do ever study Bible, it does address a lot of these things. And it's on like the first page of any book.

Ryan: I would say, yes, go to those, but don't do that so immediately.

Selena: Yes, yes. Sorry.

Ryan: I wanna finish with this. Asking questions of the text: what is the context? So what do author intend? Who is the audience? What is the context? By that, I mean, immediately in the surrounding chapter, in the surrounding book, what is the context biblically? Where does that book sit in the grand scheme of all the scriptural narrative? Where does it stand culturally?

By understanding a little bit... And some of this you won't know unless you do some pair of biblical study. Like, we don't necessarily know automatically what was happening in Corinth when Paul wrote the letters to the Corinthians. You can find some of that stuff. But there are some historical context that can be teased out from other resources.

So we approach it and we're asking those three categories of questions. And then we have this. Ask yourself this, "What troubles me about this text? In other words, what don't I understand, what doesn't sit right, what is twisting around me as a result of reading this, and where do I find those answers?"

And that's where we would then go to the text to let it interpret itself. Now, it's very tempting. And I do agree with Selena that like study Bibles are incredible. The ESV Study Bible is very well done. It's very tempting to say, "Oh, I have a small question. I'm just gonna basically Google it" at that point instead of wrestling with it myself, instead of thinking to myself, "Okay, so Paul wrote this, why did he say...?" Okay, we'll go by 1 Corinthians 7. It's the do not withhold from your spouse his or her conjugal rights. *[Selena laughs]* Because it's a marriage podcast. *[Selena laughs]*

So, why would Paul write that? It's very easy just to go to that spot in the study Bible and say, "Okay, well, that's a response to X, Y, and Z. And here's what Paul's actually saying and here's how we can understand it."

Selena: Which I don't think anything is wrong with that. But you're saying, "Go the next step. Go like 10 steps down the line of, okay, he wrote this to answer some of the clashing that was happening... Was it in the church in Corinth?"

Ryan: Yeah, exactly. You go back up and say, "Okay, this is where this text is landing on this particular spot." Go up. Ask yourself, why would Paul be talking about this? In other words, you're learning how to get the deer yourself. Like, instead of just expecting it to show up packaged neat on your front porch, do some of that bloody work of getting into the text.

And you could be completely wrong. That's why we have this study aids, the Study Bible, which people who do that are faithful brothers and sisters. They've written those texts. They are not just coming up with their own ideas. So we can then say, "Okay, but what happened? Even if you're wrong, what

happen in that case?" is that you have now learned what it's like to dissect the word for yourself. And if you've done it incorrectly, you can say, "Okay, this is what I could do to be correct or have a better shot at being correct next time and see how I missed this, how I missed that."

So let the text first interpret itself. And then—this is the application piece—decipher meaning versus significance. And what I mean by that is... I'll use this example from Genesis 49:18. It is one of those passages that's kind of like a bookend passage at the end of the book of Genesis. And it says this. Jacob had just passed away. Joseph was Pharaoh's right-hand guy. He had basically saved the entire nation of Israel, all the tribes of Israel by-

Selena: Saved like all of Egypt.

Ryan: Yeah, all of Egypt by letting them come and eat the food that he had stored up for Egypt. [00:30:00] Long story short, Jacob dies and so his brothers are afraid that Joseph is going to basically kill them because they sold him into slavery.

And so they go to him. So they sent a message to Joseph saying, "Your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, 'Please forgive the transgressions of your brothers, and their sin because they did evil to you.' And now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. Joseph wept as they spoke to him. His brothers also came to him and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear. For am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. So do not fear, I will provide for you and your little ones.'"

So that's one of those verses that will read that will say, "Oh, this is great, what they meant for evil, God meant for good." And so we'll be driving down the road and someone burgess in front of us to cut us off, "What you meant for evil God meant for good." I'm using a very silly example but the point is, is that we can sometimes read that text and say, "Okay, now anything that's evil to me, God means for good for me."

But no, the context of that passage shows us something about God's character that then is a deeper well from which we can draw. It says we have a God, who is sovereign, who is doing things that we don't always understand at the time, who will use hardship and who will use injustice to His sovereign good ends. This is so much more than a fortune cookie passage.

Selena: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ryan: This is a deep well of security, knowing that this is the type of God we serve. But we don't get that if we just look at the information of it and immediately jump to the applications without seeing the context and then seeing the application.

Selena: On seeing response, there's a lot of weeping in the end of Genesis between Joseph and the reconciliation with his brothers and his father. And you read these words a little while later, you know, that's like 20 years in the Bible. I mean, this is a long time that they hadn't seen each other. They sold him when he was like a teenager. He gets sold to Egypt, sold to Pharaoh, mistreated in the dungeon, and then he's given a wife, he's the right-hand man of Pharaoh and has kids. Like he has his whole life.

And then he meets his family again. I mean, there's just so much in there in terms of familial relationships, and how Joseph could say, "You're already forgiven. Who am I? God?" I mean, that kind of response can only reveal the work of God in his own heart. Right?

Ryan: You said something about who Joseph who, that he was able to endure all that and still-

Selena: God had His favorable hand on him. It says a lot too.

Ryan: Absolutely. Hope that's encouraging to you. Obviously, this is a huge topic. And we're just trying to kind of inter-

Selena: Encourage.

Ryan: Inject some encouragement to just see God's word for what it is and run to it, run to the word and let it-

Selena: Read a lot of it.

Ryan: Yeah, let it have its proper place in your life because these are the words of God... the Holy Spirit is there to enliven them in your heart and to help you live by them and to apply them.

Selena: It's not boring like I thought. Yes, there are some chapters that are a bit long to go through, like Chronicles, Numbers, and Leviticus.

Ryan: Selena is so hardcore. We went through some of the-

Selena: The lineage.

Ryan: The lineage. And I'm like, "What do you do when you get to the lineage?" She's like, "I read it." And I was like, "I was gonna skip it." And you're like, "Did you even read the Bible then?" *[both laughs]* I'm like, "Shoot!"

Selena: There's something about going through the lineage a few times. You catch different names, and you hear them through your other studies. But anyways. Just be encouraged, friend, not to just stay in one spot that you're familiar with in the Bible. Or don't be afraid to read six, seven chapters a day. I mean, your life will just be so enriched and your connection with your spouse, even your ability to love your spouse who might be really challenging and difficult, I think you grow in that. The Lord strengthens you and empowers you and gives you more patients than you thought you could have in order to deal with and love your spouse the way he would want you to love them.

Ryan: It's good. So the Bible is not just words on a page. They're not just a bunch of books that were thrown together by old guys hundreds of thousands of years ago. These are living, alive—that's redundant—words of God. And not only that, but they give us the story of the redemptive work of God, the promise of God, the failure of our kind, mankind to keep our end of the promise, but God's still being faithful in fulfilling the promise Himself, namely, through sending Christ, who lived a perfect life, died a sinners death, didn't stay dead, rose from the grave, ascended up into heaven, now sits at the right hand of the Father, all so that we might stand justified in Him. He was the sacrifice for our sin that we could never pay.

And so that's what Scripture is all about. [00:35:00] Christ is the whole point of it. He's the climax, He is the sum total of what Scripture tells us. And so we want to invite you into relationship with Him. The Bible says, God loved the world in such a way that He sent His Son, so that whoever believes in Him won't have to perish, but have eternal life instead.

And so if you want to become a Christian, if you're still hearing this, watching this, you're hearing my voice right now, this could be the moment that you'd make a decision to place your faith in Christ. If you want to start down that path, I encourage you to find a pastor, a friend who believes in Jesus. If you don't have one of those, we have a website that might get you there. Thenewsisgood.com. Check that out. There's a place to find a good Bible-believing church there. We hope you'll take us up on that offer.

With that said, let's pray. Father, thank you for this gift of your word. I pray for the couples that are hearing this, that are watching this, that they would have a deep hunger for your word. And Lord, encourage them. And I pray that you would embolden them as they approach your word to not just read it, but to

let it read them. Lord, that it might change hearts, soften our hearts, change our lives and make our marriages that much better and much more glorifying to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Thanks for joining us. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention our lovely patrons. Gosh, you guys are incredible.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: We've had a number of new patrons this last week. Awesome.

Ryan: I think we had like three or four new patrons.

Selena: Praise God!

Ryan: Maybe I'll start mentioning their names. I'm always kind of like, "Do they want their names mentioned?"

Selena: Maybe just their first name or something.

Ryan: Okay, John and Sally. I don't know. I have to look you guys up. I don't know about privacy. Anyway. We love you guys. Thank you. If you'd like to partner with us, this content is largely possible because of our partners.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. Certainly, if that's not you, you're still welcome here. We will continue to produce content by the grace of God if the Lord wills it. So with that said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan: We're getting worse at this.

Selena: I know.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Matthew 4:4
 - Hebrews 4:12

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

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