

WHY IS MARRIAGE WORTH FIGHTING FOR?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/why-is-marriage-worth-fighting-for>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So every so often we do these videos. I feel like they're more of a 50,000-foot view of just encouragement for couples. Why? I mean, we do a lot of topical stuff. If you look back at a lot of episodes, we talk about communication, sex, finances, and then we go into subtopics on that.

But this episode, I just... We have felt lately we need to encourage and bolster marriages to help them understand and just, I don't know, get that renewed strength of why they're fighting for their marriage. Because we get thousands of people that write in and they are just on the brink, right? Divorce papers are in hand, people... they aren't living together. There's just a lot of things that have already kind of put them down that path.

And you may not be there, but you may know someone or maybe you're just kind of like, "Marriage is fine, I don't know. Maybe it could be better." I think we always just need this encouragement of why we need to fight.

I mean, if you've heard us ever talk about the why because we don't believe in behavior modification of just like, "Well, just kind of stick it out and make it work as best you can." No! What is the heart motivation behind it? Why are we here sitting here encouraging you to fight for your marriage when it's hard, even fighting to protect it when it's good? Why, why, why, why should you fight for your marriage? And why should you fight with a fierce tenacity? We will discuss this and hopefully encourage you on the other side.

[00:01:34] music>

Ryan: Burn the ships, as they say.

Selena: We did, yes. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: This was one of our early episodes. Burn the ships. I believe that was from some sort of story of a conqueror. I want to say like Cortes or somebody like that.

Selena: Oh, yeah.

Ryan: They were losing a battle, and so instead of letting the men retreat, they burned the ships. And what that meant was, they had nowhere to go. I find that helpful when talking about why marriage matters. Because if you actually

see marriage as what it is, the lifelong covenant, the institution created by God that we are stepping into, we're not somehow creating a marriage on our own, we are stepping into an idea that God birthed in his own mind, that's probably a bad way to say that, but an idea from the mind of God, then we actually won't see it that way, then we won't see it in the way that it was meant to be seen.

And that allows us to then resign ourselves to the beauty, wonder, and I guess, just the commitment of it—the commitment of being in this covenant with you. We're going on 20 years now. We can say that. We celebrated our 90th anniversary. *[Selena laughs]* So we're heading to 20 years. That's a big one.

Selena: It's a big one.

Ryan: Better start planning now. *[laughs]* That wouldn't have been possible, had we thought there was somewhere along the line, there was a ripcord that we could pull and bail on this thing.

Selena: Well, and I'm not sure-

Ryan: The backup plan and the-

Selena: I think the backup plan. I don't know if that's always... Yeah, I don't know how relevant that is to a lot of Christian marriages. I mean, there are.

Ryan: Oh, fully it is.

Selena: I mean, culture is totally-

Ryan: Well-defined Christian, because a lot of people will... No offense if you call yourself *[both laughs]*... A lot of people call themselves Christians and don't even really know what the Bible says. It's just something they check on our census form.

Selena: Right. We subscribe more to just how we've been raised in what culture says rather than actually digging into the word on our own and for ourselves. And so-

Ryan: Which check out the last episode for that. We talked a lot about biblical literacy in the home.

Selena: I guess I just want to say like, yeah, we are all about no Plan B, burn the ships. There's no options. And so we're not-

- Ryan:** Who are we though, real quick? *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, yeah.
- Ryan:** I'm Ryan. This is Selena. We are the Frederick. Yeah, right? You're Selena. You're Frederick. I call her Frederick.
- Selena:** I'm a Frederick, yeah.
- Ryan:** We're Fredericks. We have been married going on 20 years now. We have three daughters and one on the way. Although we don't know if it's a boy or a girl. We're gonna wait to find out. We have our suspicions, though.
- Selena:** We have our suspicions.
- Ryan:** Anyway, I wanted to interject that for the people who don't know who we are. So...
- Selena:** Also, just kind of a little caveat. We are not wanting to sit here and judge your circumstance. We're not sitting here prescribing and just like, "Hey, we've got the perfect marriage so follow us." No, in fact, we would say we've had our struggles and we've had our own share of conflicts and things that we've had to work through as well.
- Again, our hope and prayer is that your strength would be renewed no matter where you're sitting at in your marriage, your hope will be unwavering, and that your eyes are just kind of lifted today maybe from just the mire of the battle that you're facing with your spouse right now [00:05:00] of, you know, kind of those tit for tat of "If he's going to do this, then I'm going to do that." And those kinds of things.
- Let's lift our eyes, let's take a breath. Like breathe, lift our eyes, know why we should be fighting for our spouse, for our marriage, not just how we're going to fight against them, right? But know why and how we're actually going to fight in our marriage.
- Ryan:** It's good. In that we want to point you to the objective reality of what God has said is good, and right, and true. And that is that marriage is good and right and true and worth fighting for. And we enter into a covenant, objectively speaking, a covenant of the sort of which marriage is.
- Selena:** Right.

Ryan: It's not one that should be easily or... even Jesus said it can't even be erased. What God has joined together, let man not put asunder, right? It's what He said. So we want to point you to the beauty and the kind of the bigness and the majesty of it as something that's designed by God so that it can be one of the primary reasons that you are compelled to fight for it.

Marriage is not just something that we just discard and we throw away as soon as it starts to get tough or hard or a little bit tattered. It's so valuable. And for the reasons we're gonna describe here, it's too valuable to discard so easily.

Selena: Amen. So let's talk about... Well, before we talk about the greater truth, if you want to know more, we did actually... this is based on one of the last chapters in our book-

Ryan: The book called *Fierce Marriage*.

Selena: In the book called *Fierce Marriage*. I will do another one that holds still. This was one of our first traditionally published books-

Ryan: Kind of our marriage manifesto.

Selena: Yeah. If we could have coffee with you and talking about marriage, these are all things that we would talk about. But we definitely leave you commissioned, and we want you to feel kind of equipped to know, again, why you should fight for your marriage if you're not already. We need to know what and who you're actually fighting for, and who's fighting for us, right? We're not just fighting this on our own. The greater truth here is that we don't fight for our marriage as much as Christ uses our marriage to fight for us.

Ryan: Oh, wow.

Selena: I don't know if you remember that.

Ryan: If we wrote that-

Selena: It's been a-

Ryan: It's been a little while since we wrote that.

Selena: It's been a little while. It's really easy to see the parallel with the gospel and marriage, Christ being the head and the church being the bride. There's this parallel of love and sacrificial love. And so when you see kind of how Christ uses your marriage, it's not just about your happiness, your pleasure, your ease, if you have the cutest guy on your arm, [*chuckles*] right, or gal, [*Ryan*

laughs] I guess for you and me. It's not just about how we look or the adventures, the fun adventures we can have. We are actually an image of the gospel, we are an image of Christ.

Ryan: I read... It said this way. And we're looking at the Ephesians 5. You know, that passage of "Husbands love your wife as Christ loved the church." One pastor said it like this, Husbands are to demonstrate the saving, and wives or to demonstrate what salvation looks like. The saving and the salvation. And that is like a full picture of the gospel, right, of the self-sacrificial love that Christ poured out in the cross.

A husband is to pour that out, to be pierced on behalf of his wife, to take the fall, so to speak. He doesn't, obviously, literally save his wife's soul. That's not what we're saying. But it's a mirror image in the sense or a dim reflection of that saving love.

And then a wife is to submit. In our culture, that's a bad word. But a wife is to submit under her own husband as unto Christ. That's a picture of salvation, of what it means, what it looks like to be the saved one. And then within all that, there's the selfless love, there's the transparent love, the love that loves despite your flaws and is willing to be a new... You'd love me despite my flaws as well, and willing to be exposed for the sake of the sanctification because we have a security in Christ that is baseless without Him.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So it's a massive, massive truth. And if we abandon the marriage in the moments when it's hard, I would venture to say that, in a way, it undermines our core understanding of what the gospel actually means. If you're a wife and you've been abandoned by your husband, well, that's not sacrificial love. You have not been able to see that version, that reflection of the gospel as it was designed. Now, it doesn't mean you don't understand the gospel, but it does mean you're not seeing it in that part of your life.

Selena: Right. [00:10:00]

Ryan: And if a wife refuses to love her husband in the way that God has laid it out Ephesians and Colossians and other passages, and it has to do with submission, then that husband's never going to see that salvation worked out in that specific part of his life. Now, obviously, he's going to know what it means because he's saved himself. Anyway, it's just such a beautiful thing.

Selena: And marriage is such an opportunity for our own sanctification, right, and it's such an opportunity for us. We know that we are not the only ones fighting

for our marriage, that Christ is fighting for us, that He's constantly pursuing our hearts. He's the model of love.

And so if He is fighting for us, if He is pursuing our hearts, if He is relentless and unwavering and just completely committed to us, I mean, what other example do we need to be for a reason to fight for our marriage? Like, what other model do we need? Like if Christ has forgiven us, we say this all the time, if Christ has forgiven me, how can I hold any sins against my spouse, my husband?

Does that excuse the sin? No. We deal with it. We go through whatever steps we need to go through to rebuild trust and whatnot. But we have Christ as our model, as our foundation, as our example of love. And so, marriage-

Ryan: I just want to read these statements because I feel like they're so succinct and-

Selena: They were. They were in our book. That's why I wrote them in the-

Ryan: That's why writing is so fun, because you get to see it the best way you can think of instead of trying to come up with it on the fly. It says, "The greater truth is this, you don't fight for your marriage as much as Christ uses your marriage to fight for you." And you mentioned that earlier.

Another truth: you don't pursue your spouse's heart as much as Christ uses your spouse to pursue your heart. Talking about sanctifying one another. Another one: you don't prize your spouse's affections, with nearly the same ferocity with which Christ prizes yours.

Another one: every defining moment in your marriage is a reminder of God's relentless unwavering commitment to draw you near and conform you to the image of Christ. And finally, marriage is a way in which God draws you and your spouse closer to Him. So all of these greater truths are why we fight for marriage.

We wanna talk about this idea that came up in the book. It's the commissioned marriage. So let's talk about that. As you were kind of compiling these notes, what came to your mind?

Selena: Well, it's easy... I don't want to sound harsh where it's like "marriage is not about your happiness." But Gary Thomas has a whole book on how marriage is for your holiness, rather than your happiness. And that was, I think, pretty revolutionary for us. But happiness is not a bad thing to desire. But if that is our end all be all pursuit and that's the objective, it's not sustainable for us or

for our marriage. And putting that kind of pressure on another human being is unfair at least.

Ryan: So that's at the, I think, beginning of a commissioned marriage. Now, we're using the word "commissioned" in the biblical sense.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We were commissioned by Christ in submission to Christ. We'll read the great commission a little bit later but that's where it starts, is when you realize that marriage isn't just about... It's not an inward-pointing thing.

Selena: Right. It's not about what I can get.

Ryan: It's an outward-pointing thing and it's a Christ-pointing thing. It's not what I can get by what I can give, and it's not about just my happiness. It's about our holiness or sanctification, but Christ's holiness at work in society in a very real way. And I think that was something that we didn't really, I think, fully flesh out when we wrote this book five, six years ago-

Selena: Yeah, even our own marriage, I mean, we still function under some of these desires of-

Ryan: Yeah. But I mean like the part of it being out in the community, though.

Selena: Oh! Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: The marriage itself, the family unit being a bulwark, a bastion of holiness, a small, little, you know... what's the word I'm trying to think of? Just like a cell of the gospel in the very real world. I think that's profound. So if you're a commissioned marriage, that's something worth fighting for, knowing that we aren't just to resign this thing, we are to fight for that light, fight for being the light Christ has called to.

Selena: One thing that wasn't in the book—this is for all of you listeners and viewers—but as we were going through, I kind of was... If you've ever fought with your spouse, which maybe none of you have, but we've fought before, there's often a surrendering and a sacrifice that had needs to happen. There's gotta be some sort of compromise or some sort of give. Otherwise, you're just going to be at a stalemate.

So I guess, while we're kind of going through a few of these questions and kind of hopefully bringing clarity and lifting our eyes to the things that the Lord would have for our marriage, we want you to think about what are you maybe

holding on to that you shouldn't? [00:15:00] Is there anything that you're holding on to that you're just not going to let go and you're not going to forgive and you just can't, it's just too much? I want you to think about what that is. And let's remember that while we're, you know, talking about this. Because if there is no surrender and there's no sacrifice, then is the gospel really at work in our lives? And I know that's a hard pill to swallow, but it's also one that will bring freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Next question. Is this more about you? And we were touching on this already. Is this more about you and your happiness and pleasure than it is about what the Lord wants to do in you and your spouse and possibly even through you and your spouse?

Ryan: This can be really hard depending on where you're at.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Like Selena mentioned earlier, we get a lot of messages from people, and many of those messages are distraught spouses, husbands, and wives, saying, "I've tried everything and my wife is not responding. She hates my guts or whatever." I'm being a little bit extreme, but maybe not. Or wife that says, "My husband will not come to church with me. He will not read the Bible with me. He does not care."

I got an email this morning or yesterday, a professing atheist, and she just wants to pray with her husband. And what does that woman do? And so you know, if it's very-

Selena: Her husband was the atheist?

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Okay, gotcha.

Ryan: So, I don't want to gloss over that because there's so many hard circumstances and you feel trapped.

Selena: You do feel trapped.

Ryan: And what we're seeing maybe falls onto that sides and you're feeling like, "Oh, man, are they're saying this a covenant, it's not something we just dissolve quickly, it doesn't just go away. Now I'm even more trapped than I realized."

If the focus is inward, if the focus is on what we're talking about and not on Christ, then that burden will crush you. We live in a fallen world. And that's a very kind of trite Christian thing to say, but it's so true, we live in a fallen world, which means there are going to be couples that are or spouses that are feel like they're trapped in a marriage that is too difficult to endure.

Our hope is in Christ. Our hope is also in that Christ might work here and now. Our hope is ultimately in Christ there and then. We also hope and pray that he works here now. And we're happy to say that there are also stories, many stories we get of wives and husbands who were in those situations, and they still fought, they still prayed, they clung to Christ in the middle of it and He did a miracle.

Now, if there were a pill that we could give you to take or some sort of trick that we can tell you that would turn everything around, we would be the first ones to show you what that was. But the only trick we know it's not a trick at all, it's just faithfulness, and it's to lean into and trust Christ with it. In the middle of the pain, in the middle of the uncertainty to be the one... that woman with what the issue of blood, right? For how many years she was bleeding?

And you may feel like that woman. Like, you almost bled out and you need a touch from Christ and if you don't get it, you will die. Well, there He is. There He is. So I guess it was one encourage you in that. And these are the challenging questions. So that was on I kind of ran away with there.

Is it more about you and your happiness and pleasure than it is about what the Lord wants to do in you and in your spouse? That's another question. And then the third question is, are there ways in which you can sacrifice and give in order to take steps toward reconciliation?

And even if you've already taken those steps on your own, and your spouse is not stepping toward you as well, you can still make those steps, you can still pray, you can still hope all things like Paul talks about.

Selena: And that's really by the power and the work of Christ in your life and the Holy Spirit in your life. Right? He can sustain you, he can empower you, he can be all that you need in those really difficult and trying moments. So just know that you are being prayed for and that Christ is again fighting for your marriage, he's fighting for the reconciliation of you too.

Another part of this whole commissioned marriage is, and I think we've touched on this a lot, is about God's work in you and your spouse flowing outward. So the work of Christ, again, is not just about what's happening in us

and how we just need the pain either alleviated or we want the pain to just be fixed. It's not about just us, but it's also an outward flowing of, you know, maybe you're walking through a really hard time and you're at your community group at church and you're sharing some of the things that are challenging for you.

Someone else might be listening to that. Someone else might be being ministered to, knowing that they are not alone in some of the struggles they might be facing. So just remember that Even in the hard times, [00:20:00] and even in the difficulty, especially, I would say, that is where Christ is really glorified and honored and seen.

Ryan: That's good. So if you picture this, we're talking about the commission marriage. We're talking about what we're fighting for, is starting almost at the center of a bull's eye, almost like a rock being thrown into a pond. And it's radiating outward. And that first thing we're fighting for, that transformation that happens to glorify God in us as He works in us, in each other, then outward into our immediate vicinity, and then even further. So it's always flowing outward.

This ministry is the result of that outward flow of God's grace through us. We started this whole ministry just to show Christ on display in our failures and our faults and our imperfections. And even in our successes. We want to say, "This is because of Christ, not because Ryan and Selena are great, but because He is."

And so the next layer, the next ring out going outward is this... our posterity, I think it's how we would say it. So the fruit of the gospel-centered marriage it flows out into your children, children who have both parents, who are an actively loving the Lord and pursuing him in their marriage, those children will flourish. That's scriptural. The data bears it out. Does that mean every kid is perfect if their parents are still married? No. There's definitely some nuance to be had there. But the point is that if we are aligning ourselves more with Scripture, we can expect that the fruit will be born over time.

Selena: So you have your posterity, the children are thriving through marriages, families are built. I mean, you have this idea of, you know, through marriages, families are built; through the building of families, you have strong churches; through strong, healthy gospel-centered, Bible-believing churches, you have that as community. And so-

Ryan: Grossing right over the healthy gospel-centered Bible- *[laughs]*

Selena: Because I used it twice. *[laughs]* I just wanted to use it twice because that's what I believe it equates to. So just a few things on families and what your children see when you do fight for your marriage and they do see the gospel on display when you sacrifice, when you ask for forgiveness, when you repent to one another, when you work through hard things together. That you are showing them the gospel. They see it as their first account—the gospel. They will see you love each other or they will see you hate each other. They will see you fighting for one another or giving up on one another. But they will see something.

So be encouraged. I don't feel like burdened by that. I think just be encouraged that, again, it's not necessarily just about you and your desires and your wants. It is about pursuing your spouse pursuing and knowing that God is fighting for your marriage. And what are these other reasons that maybe weren't... they're hard to see in the midst of the battle?

Ryan: Let's read through the great commission. I feel like maybe we should have read that beginning. We always do that though. So here we are. Matthew 28, starting in verse 16. "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

So if you call yourself a disciple of Christ, this commission is for you. If you are two disciples of Christ in your marriage, this commission is for your marriage. The primary verb here, the primary imperative here is to go make disciples. And the way we go about doing that, there's the participles of baptizing them, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

So you may not be a pastor who has the opportunity to baptize and to teach, but you do have your own children. You're not gonna necessarily baptize young kids but you're teaching them.

Selena: And Christ has commissioned you. I mean, the first sentence in verse 18, "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'" And then he says, "Go, therefore." So Christ has given us the power, the authority, He's equipped us to fight these battles, to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.

So what does the Great Commission look like within our family within our marriage? Why is that something worth fighting for? That's eternity. I mean, we really are fighting for eternity when we are fighting for a marriage.

Ryan: Sure. And we're not fighting alone. We're fighting on Christ's behalf with the power of the Holy Spirit, just like you said.

Selena: Right. And no doubt people are praying for you as well and your community.

Ryan: So we have some challenge questions for you. This is, again, 50,000-foot view. We just want to kind of recalibrate the couples that will give us their ears and their eyes for Fierce Marriage Podcast-

Selena: I kind of curated some of these questions.

Ryan: So of these questions... these are Selena's questions. A little salty, a little sweet, we'll see where they go. What are you actually fighting for in your marriage? Ask yourself honestly. Maybe take this home to your spouse. Are we fighting for happiness, [00:25:00] ease, pleasure, lifestyle, and just not to be alone or just to stay together for the kids? Are we fighting for something more? Are we fighting on behalf of Christ out of obedience to Him? Or are we just fighting because it's how we survive and maintain the lifestyle that we want?

Second one: what should you be fighting for in your marriage? So what are you actually fighting for? Ask yourself that. And then ask this of yourself and your spouse as well, what should we be fighting for in our marriage? We fight for one another's hearts, we're fighting for unity and oneness. Again, not just in and of themselves, but as a means by which we could honor the Lord, we could obey His commands to love one another as Christ loved the church and how the church has loved Him in return, submitted to Him in return through you fighting for the future of our children and our children's children.

I can't tell you how many folks I've seen... and, you know, God is somehow gracious in our fallenness. But I've seen couples pull that ripcord and go through a hard time, they get divorced. And many times they look back and think, "Man, if I would have just fought a little harder our kids wouldn't have to split the weekends between homes" or "We wouldn't have this fracture that follows us for the rest of our lives." So are you fighting with that in mind, like knowing full-on like that that's worth fighting for? Let's see here.

Another question. How do you see God already at work in this fight for your marriage?

Selena: What are some of the wins you've already seen?

Ryan: How can you be grateful for what He's already done? So often we can lose sight of that. Here's a quote from the book as well. "Marriage is and always has been all about Jesus. A fierce marriage is all about God's endless love for you, His careful molding of your heart and His unquenchable passion to reach the lost." That's a fierce marriage. That's what we're fighting for. We're fighting for Christ. We're fighting because of Christ. We're fighting for what Christ is fighting for.

Selena: Yeah, for His kingdom.

Ryan: For His kingdom. And it seems like we all just want to be, you know, podcasters, bloggers, writers, we want to have influence, but maybe the thing that we have the most influence over is right underneath our nose. And that's just to love our spouse as Christ loved us and to fight for them as Christ is fighting for them.

If all this sounds great and you're wondering, "Man, how, how's it even possible?" We're gonna tell you, the whole reason we are here on this podcast, on this video is because Christ has been exceedingly good to us. We would not still be the Fredericks if Christ had not been gracious to us, had not shown us what it means to love. And we're thankful for that. That's why we want to share Him with you.

We can't give you all the tips, we can't give you all the pointers, but we can give you the one who knows how love is supposed to work. His name is Jesus, and He wants to invite you into relationship with Him, to trust Him so that you might be saved. If you want to know more about that, go to thenewsisgood.com. We've laid out some steps there.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for my wife. Thank you for the gift of marriage. Thank you that you've allowed us to step into marriage and that you've given us a strong, strong foundation upon which to build a life together. I pray for the couples that are hearing this, watching this, that they would feel encouraged, not because of things that we've said but because of who you are and how you've designed their marriage to withstand storm, their marriage to be a commissioned marriage. I pray that you would allow those couples to flourish right where they're at, to grow where they need to grow, and to praise you and glorify you all along the way. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: It'd be remiss if I didn't mention our awesome supporters. If you want to become a partner of Fierce Marriage, that would be amazing. We would love that. We just ask you to pray about it. If the Lord leads that you would follow up, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner.

If you want to check out this book, *Fierce Marriage*, then one we've been talking about, it released I believe back in 2018-ish, 20-something-ish?

Selena: I don't know. I was with a kid. Mom always writing books while pregnant apparently. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Including now.

Selena: Including now.

Ryan: You can go to fiercemarriagebook.com and you can find out all about that book. And we pray that it blesses you. 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**
 - Matthew 28:16-20

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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