

5 STEPS TO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR IN-LAWS

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Selena: This is not the first time we've done an episode on in-laws.

Ryan: And it won't be the last.

Selena: And it won't be the last. But it's holiday time around here and we figured it's a good time to start talking about how to deal with in-laws. Specifically, we'll leave you with five steps on how to have a better relationship with your in-laws. We'll get into it on the other side.

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Ryan: You know, it's good to revisit this conversation now and again because it's... What did you say today? We were talking about something else. We're talking about kids. But you said, "You don't prepare for the battle during the battle. You prepare for the battle beforehand." *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: It doesn't always have to be a battle.

Ryan: It doesn't have to be, but it can feel that way.

Selena: Sometimes, yes, it can feel that way. And there's a lot of different dynamics that come into play with those types of relationships, which we'll talk about.

Ryan: And the battle is not always against them. It's sometimes an internal struggle to try and be patient or try to be understanding or try to be long-suffering. *[both chuckles]* Actually, I think we have really good in-law relationships. So if you're our parents and you're listening to this, don't feel like we're talking about you, please. So, yeah.

If you don't know who we are, my name is Ryan. This is my lovely wife Selena. We are the Fredericks, otherwise known as the Fierce Family here on YouTube, if you're watching, or on the podcast side, we have the Fierce Marriage Podcast, which is what this episode is. Also, we have Fierce Parenting. We live to help couples live in light of who Christ is, what He did, what He's called them to do.

So if that's something that you want to do, if you're a Christian and you're married, or you're a parent, then we're here to help you. So thank you for joining us. Let's just dive right in.

- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Selena, what do you love about my parents? *[both laughs]* Let's talk about that.
- Selena:** Let's start right there. *[chuckles]* Let's start where we would in our little rundown here because I think-
- Ryan:** Stick to the script.
- Selena:** No, I just think it's helpful for people to kind of identify the two different camps that... there's kind of a spectrum, right, of where in-laws fall into, and it's kind of unspoken. So you get the in-laws that maybe are way too involved. They have their favorites-
- Ryan:** What do you mean "their favorites"?
- Selena:** Well, there's just favoritism. Like they might just be nicer to their own child than they are to their child's spouse. So there might be favoritism or maybe there's sibling favoritism when it comes to family get-togethers, and that just puts some pressure on your own marriage.
- These are more, I think... We call them marriage adversaries versus advocates. So this would kind of fall under, you know, they take sides, they are involved in gossip and hurtful comments, and they kind of lack respect for your marriage covenant.
- Ryan:** True.
- Selena:** So, again, marriage adversaries want their own child to win and be the best and all those things-
- Ryan:** Or they just have a favorite... I'm thinking of Andy in *The Office* His older brother-
- Selena:** That's what I meant. Yeah, they have a sibling that they just-
- Ryan:** They like adore him. Josh Groban. He is hilarious. And he's this overachiever and Andy's just kind of always the disappointment to the father. It's very cringey at points.
- Selena:** It is. It is.

Ryan: And that's a caricature obviously. But it can sometimes come out in subtle ways. "You know, so and so is the golden child." "Oh, of course, of course." Or "So and so is always bringing up their drama," or "They always want to talk about politics," or "They've gone off the right deep end," or "They've gone off the left deep end," politically speaking. And that can create factions. It can create alliances that may or may not be articulated.

As Christians, okay, so if you're a levelheaded, Bible-believing, Bible-living, actually you think the Bible is more than just a book of advice, you think it's actually instructive for how you live your life, then you might find yourself feeling isolated. Because a lot of families, even though they might be a Christian family, it's an exceedingly rare to find a family that is living out the tenants of Scripture consistently. And if you're trying to do that, then you're going to need some wisdom in how to navigate this, because you're gonna have a lot of opportunity for frustration, you're gonna have a lot of opportunity for maybe-

Selena: Being offended or offending someone.

Ryan: ...being offended or offending. So all of that compounds on top of the already murky in-law waters. Some of that has to do with boundaries. We're not gonna talk about boundaries a lot today.

Selena: No, I think we're talking a little bit about them. But I wanted to kind of even on the spectrum. Like we talked about how some parents are way too involved. But then you get the other parents that are just not involved at all, right? They don't offer to help take the kids. They just always want you to come to them. They're kind of like, "Well, we've raised our kids, we've done our job. So now it's time for us to just kind of enjoy our life."

Again, sadly, this perspective also falls short. Right? It doesn't allow for God's grace to continue, I think, in the relationship for both parties to experience [00:05:00] true blessing of being there for the next generation, experiencing the joy of being a grandparent. But then if you're a grandparent or in-law who is just too involved in their children's marriage, that can definitely break up the foundation as well.

So it's important, I think, for us to maintain the perspective that, you know, in light of the gospel, we're all being sanctified. None of us is perfect. Sometimes I think we set higher standards on our parents-

Ryan: True.

- Selena:** ...and on our in-laws than we do for ourselves. So I think we need to approach this whole conversation with lots of grace and also understanding. You know, we say it constantly to ourselves, if we do have frustrating moments with our parents, we're like, "We're also not 60 or 70 years old. We haven't lived a whole nother lifetime yet." We may be more like them than we want to admit when we're that old, you know, God willing. *[Ryan laughs]* So just things to be thinking about as you're willing to-
- Ryan:** The Lord willing we'll be more like them? Is that what you're saying?
- Selena:** No, Lord willing that we live that long. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Oh, okay. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Anyways, let's just go through a few scriptures to kind of frame out this conversation and then we can talk about some of the problems that are pretty common. We've kind of named a few. And then go into kind of the five steps of how we can improve that relationship.
- Ryan:** I think we should talk about something real quick.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Quick sidebar. You are 33 weeks pregnant now?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Okay. So I commend you for the talking you're doing. *[Selena chuckles]* Because as far as-
- Selena:** Do I feel like I'm breathing hard? There's a baby right here and I'm just-
- Ryan:** This is right.
- Selena:** I'm trying to breath and talk *[laughs]* all at the same time because sometimes things are hard.
- Ryan:** There's literally two people.
- Selena:** Well, okay. No, don't say there's two.
- Ryan:** There's two people right there.
- Selena:** There's two, yes.

- Ryan:** And one is pushing on your lungs. So yeah, I commend you, my lovely wife.
- Selena:** If I seem a little out of breath, *[laughs]* I'm not running a marathon on here. My life is so- *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** You can talk slower too. That's okay. It's acceptable.
- Selena:** Am I talking fast?
- Ryan:** No, I'm just saying if you need to. Because the podcast-
- Selena:** I speed people's voices up when I listen to podcasts. So I'm like din din din.
- Ryan:** That's why you get at the normal pace because some people are going to speed it up.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** If we talk too fast, there's no way-
- Selena:** The speed button is too fast.
- Ryan:** The speed button is too fast.
- Selena:** Trying to get it all in one breath.
- Ryan:** We're getting real meta here.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** All right. So we got some scriptures. Leave and cleave. That timeless, obviously, wisdom from the scriptures. Genesis 2:24, the husband will leave his family and cleave to his wife.
- Selena:** *[inaudible]* shall leave his father and-
- Ryan:** And become one flesh.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** That was the Ryan Revised Version right there. *[both chuckles]* Matthew 19:5-6. You don't have that-

Selena: It echoes the same thing. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." And I think this was in context with talking about divorce, if I'm not mistaken.

Ryan: Yeah, he was having a debate. The Pharisees tried to "we gotcha ya" with Jesus and He-

Selena: Jesus always wins. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: So there's a distinction being made. I think that's what we're trying to say is there is a distinction between your nuclear family that you came from, your family of origin and the family that you then create with your spouse. That's an important distinction to be made. And there's a boundary there that shall not be transgressed at least. If it is transgressed, it's at your own peril.

Selena: Right. It's supposed to be-

Ryan: It's not a border that has zero immigration.. Like people will cross the boundary in healthy ways and unlawful ways to enter into... What I mean by that is they speak into your relationship or they're involved in various ways. But the point is, there is delineation there.

That's not such a radical idea for us in our culture. I think in other cultures that maybe preceded what we see currently in the West, the last 100, 150 years in the West, there were a lot more multigenerational blurring of those lines, to our own fault in some ways because we've gotten so atomized as individuals and as nuclear families that we forget to include sometimes the older generations, the parents, the in-laws. I think we miss out on a lot of untested wisdom that way.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: All that to say there's a boundary to be had. And we're just going to talk about how to maintain that border, if you will, in a very healthy way.

Selena: Well, and in a joyful and godly way. But we're gonna look at one more little section of Scripture because I think it helps provide you with the roles of... It's Titus 2:1-6. So teach sound doctrine. It's talking about the roles of older men, older women. Not that you need to like, say, "Mom, you need to act like this more." But maybe it's something you as yourself can pray about and aspire to or even talk about with your parents if they're open to that.

So verse two... Or one. [00:10:00] Yeah, one, sorry. "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled."

Ryan: Such a beautiful passage. It is so systematic in how he approaches the various kind of generational pockets of people that are within a church gathering. And I love how it says the older folks are to conduct themselves in a way that is honorable.

Now, if you have in-laws that are not doing that, this is gonna make it a lot harder. And they're not obviously following this. They're not being sober-minded. They're not being dignified. They're not being self-controlled, sound in their faith. But then it said, in kind of that state of being, now, act in this way. Be reverent and not slanderers or slaves to too much wine. I think it's funny that that's what it says to the-

Selena: To the women?

Ryan: Yeah. It does say so to women.

Selena: It does say self-control, though, to the older man, to the older women, to the young women, to the younger men. Self-control all the way through.

Ryan: Now train the young women and the young men in these ways: to be like you. But it's saying it, "Within their own sphere." So in the home, be submissive to their own husband. It's like you're speaking into, in a healthy way, if this is how it's playing out, speaking into this-

Selena: Next generation.

Ryan: Yeah, and within our borders.

Selena: Yes, yes.

Ryan: So I guess what we're trying to get at is that's such a beautiful harmony to be had. And I think so often we end up playing defense in these relationships when what I hear you saying is that stop playing defense. Go on the offense in terms of seeking out the life-giving aspects of what is possible and what is biblical and what's not honoring in these relationships.

Selena: And again I don't want to paint this picture that like if you nail all these things you're gonna have a problem-free relationship with your in-laws. No, this is just a way of being with them. So when conflicts come, when there's a disagreement or a miscommunication, you can still deal with one another with reverence and good behavior and self-control, you know, showing yourself, I guess, not fruitful to what God's doing but just showing yourself that you are pursuing the things of God in this relationship in how you communicate to them and what you communicate, and getting through all those.

So anyways, we need to move on because we're just going to blow up our time here. Again, the topic is five principles for building a biblical relationship with your in-laws. We talked about kind of the spectrum of in-laws, too involved, not involved enough. But let's talk about a little bit a few more of those common in-law issues that might just kind of get you thinking as a listener or viewer saying, "Oh, yeah, I see this sometimes in our relationship." One is uninvolved, or too involved, which you talked about. What's the next one?

Ryan: Let me give me *[laughing]* a break here. Divisiveness.

Selena: I can talk all the time. *[Ryan laughs]* I'll go all night.

Ryan: Because my wife is pregnant, I'm on high alert, like, How can I possibly help her in any way? Because I feel so useless. *[laughs]* I got to find ways-

Selena: Oh, your time is coming. *[laughs]* Don't you worry.

Ryan: Let me just talk to divisiveness. We talked about the people that aren't advocating. But if your mother-in-law is pulling your wife aside and saying like, "What did your hus..." You know, like, basically do like, I don't know, in some way criticizing you, that is not constructive, that's divisive. And it could go both ways.

Selena: Or saying things to your kids about you behind their back.

Ryan: It happens. Annoyances. It's funny you say the word of "annoyance" and it automatically makes you feel like, "Oh, it's not a big deal." But the thing about annoyances that feel like a big deal in this context.

Selena: Well, they're always talked about after the fact, right? Like, "Oh, I can't believe this happened. Right on scale. Right on time. That's what they said and did."

Ryan: And if you don't deal with annoyances in a balanced way, in a charitable way-

- Selena:** Some controlled way.
- Ryan:** ...they will evolve into deep-seated bitterness. Because you can see patterns of annoyance. And the patterns, they are no longer patterns of behavior but they're patterns of this is who you are. And that becomes a source of bitterness.
- Another one is dysfunction. So if every time you have your in-laws over they fight or they're always arguing or maybe they're... whatever the dysfunction is, or maybe one in-law is complaining about his or her spouse-
- Selena:** Or they're not engaged at all with each other.
- Ryan:** Interference. They want to interfere with your marriage. I think one thing our parents... So Selena's mom and my parents have kind of this pact. Do you remember the pact? [00:15:00]
- Selena:** Yeah. They don't get involved unless... Ever. They try to avoid I think ever getting involved. But they made it like on the day of our wedding.
- Ryan:** We rode off into the sunset, and we're going off honeymoon, it's gonna be great. And they all took a deep breath, "It's done. They're gone. They're out the door." They looked at each other and said, "Let's not get in the way."
- Selena:** Don't meddle. They're not gonna meddle.
- Ryan:** They're not gonna meddle. Which I really appreciate. But they're-
- Selena:** They're also available if we have questions to them and come to them and say, "We have a question for you." They're not going to offer advice unless we seek it out, I think.
- Ryan:** I was gonna say there's a downside to the non-meddling because they're not offering advice. But you just nailed it because they do offer it, but we need to seek it out. Now, there are times when I kind of wish I just knew the answer without having to go get it.
- Selena:** Don't we all? *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Don't we all? Another one, the final one that we'll cover here is lack of acceptance.
- Selena:** And I think this might be one of the bigger ones we see. You know, "Oh, gosh, I can't believe he married her" or "I can't believe she married him. He's such a

loser," or "He's made so many mistakes." They can really just kind of hope... Parents can hold on to that, I think, for the kids, because as a parent you want the best for your children. You don't want somebody who might cheat on them, or who goes to work and blows all their finances on something and is just not wise with their money or wants to take care of their family. So the lack of acceptance, which might be... It might be a thing. It might be legitimate.

So those are things you kind of have to work through and work out. But all this with the caveat that you're in a relationship with your parents, and that there isn't any abuse or harm or something that's unresolved. So if there is abuse in the past that you haven't resolved, this conversation is probably not for you.

Ryan: Well, it just needs to be taken with that in mind.

Selena: Sure. This is not counseling that we're giving you. This is just kind of some advice that we've learned and hope it blesses you on your journey.

Ryan: So the whole goal here is to have a better relationship. It may not be a perfect relationship, it may not be what you hope it is. It will ultimately become-

Selena: We've named this thing twice. Biblical and better.

Ryan: Sure. Whatever.

Selena: Biblical is better.

Ryan: But that you would increase incrementally and have improvements. Before we get into the five things—I'm not trying to drag it out—but I want to mention this idea of boundaries once more, because we had a... It's actually a mini course in our Gospel Centered Marriage online learning platform. You go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com, if that piques your interest.

But there's one. It's how to maintain or have deal with difficult in-law dynamics. We talked to our friends Mary and Dimitri Spadle [SP]. And they have huge families and very complex in-law dynamics. Dimitri is a pastor, and he shared some really good wisdom. He said, One of the things about boundaries and within-laws is, you have to first articulate the boundaries. You have to discuss them, articulate them, say, "This is where the line is. This is the type of behavior that is-

Selena: It is the kind thing to do-

Ryan: It's kind.

- Selena:** ...to bring clarity.
- Ryan:** And then what he said that was profound to me is you then invite them into maintaining the health by enforcing those boundaries with you.
- Selena:** So good.
- Ryan:** So you say, "We want to have a healthy relationship with you. We love you. You're part of our family. That's never going to change. We want to continue being in relationship with you. But if these boundaries are breached, then we need to talk about that."
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** I just want to put that foundation there. Number one, okay, we're talking about how to have better/biblical relationships with your in-laws. The first one is this. So foundational, grace upon grace. In other words, we are all sinners. I don't say that in the antinomian or licentious way where we're not going to now care about what God says. We do care about what God says. But we also know that we have fallen short of the glory of God. We're all sinners. And so we all need Jesus, and we all need His love, we are in the process of being sanctified. Now, if your in-laws aren't saved, then obviously don't hold them to the...
- Selena:** You can't hold them to the same standard.
- Ryan:** Don't hold the same moral standard-
- Selena:** ...of being saved. Yeah.
- Ryan:** Right. And so you just love them like you would love anybody who is unsaved.
- Selena:** Right. But you can still, I think, invite to enforce some boundaries as well.
- Ryan:** Yes. Yes. And the difficulty there is that even though... you're not treating them like a stranger who's unsaved. You've known them your entire life, if not most of your life.
- Selena:** Yeah, it's hard.
- Ryan:** And so you have some history there that you need to work through. But I think the foundational understanding and truly internalizing this idea that I cannot expect your parents to be perfect. I cannot hold every mistake they've ever made against them. You cannot expect my parents to be perfect. As soon as

we start having that moral high ground, then I think we start to see that relationship begin to degrade.

Selena: And what a beautiful opportunity for you to be able [00:20:00] to minister to your in-laws or to your family and model Christ's love to them in such a way that says, "Hey, this is one of our boundaries. And it's because we believe this, we don't want this to be an influence on our kids," whatever it is. And so it's a loving thing. Just bringing clarity to the table. So anyways, I don't know. You see things as an opportunity as well. Don't just see them as a burden. I think that's been my personal motto as of lately.

Number two, leave and cleave.

Ryan: We mentioned it upfront. Again, just understanding that there is an order to these relationships. In other words, you're my wife, you're number one. I mean, underneath Christ, you're number one. I will always choose you over everyone else. In-laws need to realize that.

Selena: And you may need to realize that depending on what kind of... not what kind of spouse but how mature you are in your relationship and in your understanding of yourself and your role as a husband or as a wife and as the child of these parents. If you're married, you are leaving and cleaving and your responsibility is now to your spouse, before your parents.

Ryan: I forget who said it. But someone said that, you know, the root of sin is disordered love, basically. Like we love ourselves more than we love God. We love others more than we love God. We love something more than... So keeping the loves ordered biblically. God, spouse, you know-

Selena: And there might be seasons of going through parents being sick or something. And spouses need to be supportive of one another and on the same team with how to help the parents, right? And not just, "Okay, well, it's not our order of priority, so I'm not going to take care of my parents."

Obviously, that's not what we're saying. It's loving them and understanding the order and communicating that to them, I think, as well. So it's good, right? It's good for us to want and to have this relationship with them. But it needs to be done in light of the gospel and through boundaries. So which is number three.

Ryan: I didn't realize this was in here when I talked about the boundaries thing. But boundaries is number three.

- Selena:** Mister, before we get on, you need to review the rundown. Okay. You need to make sure that you know these things.
- Ryan:** We had a computer crisis.
- Selena:** We did. We've had book crisis, we've had computer crises.
- Ryan:** Crises.
- Selena:** Crises. *[both laughs]* You know what?
- Ryan:** So you just lay off.
- Selena:** "You just backup off, lady." *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Boundaries. *[both laughs]* You need them. Clarity is kindness. My wife wrote that.
- Selena:** I did. It was from another friend.
- Ryan:** It is doing them-
- Selena:** It's doing everyone a favor.
- Ryan:** Yeoman work is I think the word. Is you tell them like, "This is how we will get along?" It's going to take a little bit of moxie on your part. Because sometimes that clarity means a little bit of a confrontation. But the best way, okay? There's a thousand ways to start it. But I found the best way to say, "Hey, can we talk about something? I want to talk to you about this thing?" And just lay it out.
- Selena:** It's so disarming. I'm like boiling before I even come to the conversation sometimes. *[chuckles]* So I'm like-
- Ryan:** Remember the goal is to have a healthier, stronger, better, happier relationship with your in-laws. And so if they're reasonable people... Now, they may not be reasonable *[Selena laughs]* and you might have to use some other weapon. Not weapons. *[laughs]* Tactic.
- Selena:** Take your spouse with you. If it's their parents-
- Ryan:** Yes, of course.
- Selena:** ...always have them as a middleman.

Ryan: A unified front. *[Selena laughs]* As a unified front. Like, "We want to talk to you about this thing."

Selena: "I want to talk to you about this thing." He's in the middle of us.

Ryan: "About the amount of sugar you're giving the kids," or "amount of whatever." And then within your marriage, you're saying, "These are the boundaries. Let's talk about this. We need you to advocate for us." Meaning that we're not gonna be perfect. We're gonna make mistakes. Instead of being critical, if that's something they do, "help us." And that's number four actually is allowing them to be helpful.

So number one is remember you're all sinners, grace upon grace. Number two, leave and cleave. Remember what that actually means. Number three is boundaries. Number four, help. Allow them to help you.

So I think sometimes we can get in a very independent mindset and forget to... You know, I've actually found myself, as I've gotten more advanced in years, as I've gotten older, I've wanted to... I'm thinking of ways to ask my dad for help. Because I know that if I can just get that, if I can just crack that door, then it's inevitably going to lead to other areas of wisdom that I wouldn't have thought to ask him for help.

I forget what it was. I recently had a decision that I was kicking around. Oh, it was we were getting a fireplace, a gas fireplace put in and I was like, Dad, you know, there's the model that's a lot-

Selena: There's like tiptop model and then there's like the middle model, and then there's like cheap model.

Ryan: And the difference is the heat output. And we're in the middle of winter currently and my wife is pregnant, and I'm like, "Should we get the one with the greater heat output? I think we don't need it." And my dad was just [00:25:00] like, "You got a pregnant wife, just get as much heat as you possibly can, because you're gonna have a baby in that house." That attitude and that wisdom was the thing I needed to say, "Okay, I can spend the extra money for my wife. It's not just a nice thing-

Selena: Oh, it's your money. *[laughs]* I'm kidding.

Ryan: You're looking at me to make the decision.

Selena: It's true.

Ryan: You were looking to me.

Selena: I was.

Ryan: And I was like, "I can't justify it just because it's a nicer thing. I can justify it if it's for my wife and for my family/we can justify it, I'll say. You can justify it for yourself. You deserve little treat. *[both laughs]*

Selena: So go to your parents, ask them for help. I mean, that's one of the best ways I think to disarm family members as well if you're feeling like there's any just kind of like heat in the conversation, there's some tension, ask them for help. And grandparents, if you're out there listening, offer your services as grandparents, take those kids, and go make some memories and have some special time just with each of them.

Ryan: It's good.

Selena: So we are so grateful to live close. I know sometimes that's a thing—geographical location.

Ryan: The last one is perspective. We did talk about this earlier, but just want to put a cap on it here. Remember to calibrate based on who they are. Don't walk up to somebody who's never played—I'm using an analogy here—they've never played basketball before and expect them to do a slam dunk. Right? Or to perform at some level.

If they're just not there because either they don't believe the same things you believe, they are watching too much mainstream news, or whatever that thing is that's causing the conversations to go off the rails, or if they came themselves from a broken home... Like you have to do the hard work of thinking, what is it going to be like?

Now, this isn't to try and enable unhealthy, sinful behavior. But this is to try and help you come in situation on the offense. And I don't mean to be offensive, but on the offense in that you're not just-

Selena: You're not just responding. You're actually coming to the table with a strategy and with a way to love tangibly, and not just kind of jump in and hope everything works out, right? You're coming strategically and in a way that you know, reflects our Father, reflects our heavenly Father, and the work that He's doing in our own hearts.

I think it's just so important, we think it's important, obviously, to have that right perspective. One of the only ways you can do that is by being in your Bible every day and reading and letting the Word of God just pour over you. Because then those off-putting annoyances or just tension with your in-laws, yes, they will become crystal clear, but you will be more enabled to deal with them in a more loving, I think, wise fashion that reflects, again, the Lord, right?

Offering forgiveness when maybe they don't deserve it. You know, going the extra mile of inviting them over for dinner when it just feels like it's gonna be a mess anyways. Pray for them. Pray for you, pray for them and your dealings with one another. Because again, you know, the Lord is calling them to Him. Maybe they don't know Him yet, and maybe you are one of those opportunities to be used. So just keep that perspective.

Ryan: And it does start, like you said, with being in the word. I think oftentimes we think, "Yeah, I want to live by God's standard," but we don't give God the time of day. We might read a 32nd devotional or pick up the Bible app and watch the little real things on the Bible app-

Selena: Which can be helpful and supplemental. But I wouldn't say those are your meat.

Ryan: If that is your meat, then you're going to be-

Selena: Hungry.

Ryan: ...calorie deficiency and you're going to be wasting away as a spiritual person because you're not feeding on the living water, not drinking the living waters, you're not going and tasting and seeing for yourself how good God is. And so I want to invite you into that.

If you don't know Jesus personally, if you've never said, "God, I need a Savior and I trust that you are Him, Jesus, You have saved me, I turn from my sin, repenting," if you've never done that, you've never experienced that new life, we want to invite you into that.

And of course, reading the Bible is how you live out that life. It's how we learn what God's will is, what His decree is, what His laws and His grace is, you know Him. But until you put your faith in Christ, you're at a nonstarter.

So, we have a website to go to if you want to take a step down that path. It's thenewsisgood.com. And I trust that that will be helpful for whoever needs it.

Let's pray. Our God, You are so good. You have given us wisdom to love people in our lives that might sometimes feel difficult or situations that feel murky and hard to navigate. Lord, we just ask you to give us wisdom and then give us courage to act on that wisdom. [00:30:00]

Lord, I thank You that you have, in a sense, because you've given me your daughter's hand in marriage, Your daughter being my wife, that in some sense you're a father-in-law to me, as well as a father, but you've shown me what it means to have a father-in-law that is flawless. So I ask that you would help us to experience your love in a way that would help us love our human flawed in-laws in a way that is honoring to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. If you are still watching this, you're listening to this, thank you. We want to make an appeal because without our patrons we would be in a different situation, this ministry may or may not be continued. Now, God is gracious. We're not here by any other reason other than God has said, "This is still good. Keep doing it."

But one of the ways He's shown us that is through our patrons. And so we're heading up into the end of the year. We're not a nonprofit, but much of our budget comes from our patrons and how willing and consistent and I think on board with the mission they are. We'd ask you to consider that as we head into the next year, and maybe making a commitment over a number of months of being a partner with the Fierce Family, us, with the ministry.

We have some really cool things coming up. We've got new book releases, a lot of newer book releases next year from authors that aren't just us. We also have a conference coming up next year.

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: It's the first time we have mentioned that. We have children's stuff on the family side of it. We have four children's books that are being illustrated as we speak. One is almost done. The first one's almost done. What else do we have going on? New product releases. We've got new online courses. We've got too many things to name.

Anyway, if you wanna be part of that work, we're making that appeal here. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner to see the options, and we'd be honored to have you there.

Selena: And thank you to our current patrons-

Ryan: Absolutely. Thank you.

Selena: ...for all the support because you really do put food on the table and a roof over our head and you allow us to do the small work that we get to do on our side of the world. So we're just so grateful.

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Amen. This episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Genesis 2:24
 - Matthew 19:5-6

- **Recommended resource**
 - [thenewsisgood.com](https://www.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>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

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Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>