

SECRET WEAPON #2: LAUGHTER!

<https://fiercemarriage.com/secret-weapon-2-laughter>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Selena, one of my favorite sounds in the whole universe is your laughter.

Selena: I was gonna say one of my favorite things about you is the way you make me laugh *[laughs]* because no one makes me laugh like you do. *[Ryan laughs]* No one has ever made me laugh like he does. Even when we were dating, I remember you got me a birthday card. *[chuckles]* It talked about frozen water balloons and like... He's funny. They're always funny cards.

Ryan: It was back in the beginning.

Selena: And here I am a girlfriend like, "Oh, he got me a card. I wonder what he's gonna say in it. He's gonna be so nice and sweet and caring."

Ryan: Always go for the laughs.

Selena: *[laughing]* He always go for the laughs which is better.

Ryan: I mean, just the other day I wrote about this on... If you follow me on my Facebook page, I throw some things on there once in a while. I talked about how for Christmas this year—this is Christmas time we're recording this—I was trying to get my wife a nice gift.

Selena: He get nice gifts.

Ryan: And I got a Shark Robot Vacuum thing, right? Because I was like, "She want this right now." We're having the baby in about a month. This way the house will clean itself. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Clean floors are something else to me. Everybody has their thing, okay?

Ryan: And then I was on Twitter, I was reading and someone said, you know, you shouldn't give your spouse stuff to clean the house on Christmas. And I was like, "I feel convicted by this."

Selena: For the record, I would have been thrilled either way. I'm glad that you've gotten it. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: So for Christmas, I said, "Here, I was gonna give you this gift. Call it a push present. Call it a wife appreciation present. But I'm not going to wait till

Christmas to give it to you." And then we got the fun task of naming it. And I was thinking like... I think I had like VaccuChan. *[both laughs]* And Selena thought of naming it Computron. And that to me was the perfect quintessential Selena answer, because you're such a Dwight fan. And that's a Dwight thing to say.

Selena: Unashamedly.

Ryan: So Computron now goes around the house cleaning. And that's hilarious. I love it. You made me laugh. And that's one of my favorite things about you. And it's one of our secret weapons. So we're gonna talk about that on the other side.

[00:01:52] <music>

Selena: Sometimes I think that I make him laugh intentionally. And then sometimes it just happens and I'm like, "What? I didn't mean to make..." Like I'll do something silly or stupid and I don't mean to. Like I'm very fully serious about it *[both laughs]* and he's just laughing at me and I'm like, "I don't understand." But still the laughter is there. And you know, we can take it or leave it or fight about it.

Ryan: Last week's episode you said like, you know, "Don't we get not like touchy-feely?" or something. You said something touchy-feely, and it struck me and it was hilarious. *[both chuckles]* Those sorts of things.

I think the unintentional laughing is almost the best one. That comes from a friendship. So it's like this weird... You can't just set out to just say, "We're gonna start laughing more." It really, I think, wells up from a history of friendship, from not taking yourself a little too seriously. We're gonna talk about that a little bit today. We'll get into that.

But before we do that, if you don't know who we are, we are the Fredericks. My name is Ryan. This is Selena. We do all things fierce on the internet. It's our little space where we like to remind people of the Gospel, the goodness of Christ, and then how do we live in light of that. So thank you for joining us, giving us your time, giving us your attention. It's an honor to be with you.

So, Selena, let's just dive right in. You said this, no one makes you laugh like I do. Yeah, that's an honor. *[giggle chuckles]* It's my favorite thing to do. Like I said-

Selena: I think you're really good at it too. It just comes easy for you.

Ryan: It's a lot of hard work, you just don't realize it. *[Selena laughs]* You don't realize it. I think the baseline here is that few things, build your friendship, uniquely like laughter. This is one of those things that I kind of wish that we had more to go off of scripturally. We do. We have some scriptures that we're going to share first, laughter and joy Scripture.

But I just wished we could see, you know, how did Adam and Eve laugh together. We're reading through Luke and I'm reading about Zechariah and Elizabeth. I think I mentioned this earlier. I was like, "How did they relate specifically to John as a child?" But now it makes me wonder, how do they relate to one another as just people? Right. Did they laugh?

Selena: Of course. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Well, I mean, we don't really know. We didn't get any of that. Because I feel like when Luke sat down to write the Gospel of Luke or Acts or whatever, he sits down, he's go, "This is the task to do. It's a serious task so we're not gonna get distracted by things like laughing." But I happen to think humor is really fun. And for whatever reason, we don't have those things to go off of. So...

Selena: Well, it's important to look at too. So I agree with you that laughter is a huge part of building your friendship and your marriage. I also think it is a good boundary as well for others and keeping sort of those inside jokes, the laughter together. It's kind of some glue that binds us.

I know that you're not going to laugh with some other girl about something that we've talked about or some other joke. I don't know, it just shows kind of that depth to other people. And it sort of says, like, "Hey, we're married. These are things that we laugh about. These are things that, you know, you might be able to partake in here and there, if you're an Office fan or something like that."

But I don't know. [00:05:00] For me mentally it feels kind of a safe place in my heart, that I know you make me laugh in ways that you don't make any other woman laugh.

Ryan: That's true. That's a good point. Is there a flirtatious potential there? And that's maybe why laughter feels most natural with you and with brothers for me, with friends. I'm gonna try my hardest to make my friends genuinely laugh. Sarcasm is not my thing. So we just do silly stuff and keep it clean.

Selena: It's also very disarming, I think.

- Ryan:** Yes. It has a way of like, I don't know, resetting your mind and your emotions. And we're gonna talk about that in a second here. Let's talk about some scripture or bring up some scripture that, I guess, highlights laughter and joy. But first, I have a question. You haven't been prepped for this. I'm sorry.
- Selena:** Oh goodness.
- Ryan:** Who do you think is the funniest voice, author, character in the Bible?
- Selena:** The funniest?
- Ryan:** Yeah. While you think about that I'll answer.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** I think Paul's hilarious. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Why do you think Paul's hilarious?
- Ryan:** Because I feel like Paul's smart. It's like you can't be a devoted Pharisee and then flip the script completely to following Christ and not see a lot of the hilarity between the conflict. He says it once. People come in, he says, "I wish they would go the full distance." They were being legalistic about circumcision. He goes, "I wish they'd go the full distance and basically castrate themselves," which is hilarious. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** I guess I didn't think of the Bible as being funny.
- Ryan:** But we're saying here that laughter is good.
- Selena:** I know. Laughter is good. It's good for the soul. Gosh, I don't know. I kind of giggle when I read Luke because he is a physician and he seems so just factual clinical, *[Ryan laughs]* like just writing down... which I appreciate because I think that's part of my personality. But I also love a good story. Like I love narrative.
- Ryan:** That's so funny. Luke seems to be one of the best narrative guys. That's just me. Because Mark seems like he's just like *[inaudible]*.
- Selena:** Maybe Mark's a little more... yeah.
- Ryan:** But whether that's hilarity or not, I'm home. Anyway, I put you on the spot. Let's read some scripture here.

- Selena:** I'm great with those. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** I know. So the book of Proverbs teaches us that the cheerful of heart has a continual feast. That's Proverbs 15:15. Proverbs 17:22 says this: a joyful heart is what? Good medicine. Medical doctors, physicians, professionals alike, I mean, anybody you talk to, you can even do a Google search like "is laughter good for your health?" And you're going to find out yes. It is exactly what the Bible teaches that laughter itself is good medicine.
- Selena:** And I think it's even good medicine for your marriage, right? Some of the times that we've had some of our biggest fights, the one way they've gotten resolved is we've just burst out laughing, which you've probably heard in one of these almost 300 episodes that we've done. You've probably heard about those instances.
- Ryan:** I'm just gonna share the classic one that keeps coming to mind is that we were having a fight, I was cooking dinner, and I was trying to express... You were standing in the kitchen, and we were arguing. And I had felt like you weren't showing me a healthy amount of disrespect. I think we had been arguing-
- Selena:** I wasn't showing you respect. Not disrespect. I was showing you disrespect.
- Ryan:** Sorry. I didn't know how to say it because I didn't want to say like, "Respect me." That's not something that I want to say, although that's what I wanted. So I said, "I just don't get no respect." *[both laughs]* And it sounded like when Michael Scott was - what's the word? What's the word when you are practicing somebody else?
- Selena:** Oh, he was-
- Ryan:** Impersonating. There it is.
- Selena:** Impersonating.
- Ryan:** It sounded like Michael Scott impersonating Rodney Dangerfield. *[both laughs]* And immediately, immediately, I started laughing and I did not want to laugh. And I stopped myself. But that was the beginning of breaking down that particular conflict. And I feel like the older we get the quicker we are to laugh at ourselves and not take ourselves too quickly.
- Selena:** Too seriously. You have laughed at inopportune times though, too. What did that get you?
- Ryan:** *[laughing]* I got a sandwich thrown at my face. *[Selena laughs]*

- Selena:** Almost. You dodged it. Lucky for you.
- Ryan:** Matrix style!
- Selena:** In the beginning of our marriage he used to laugh all the time at the wrong-
- Ryan:** What husband does that? I mean, seriously.
- Selena:** ...at the very wrong moments. And I just was like, "How was this funny to you? How is my pain and suffering and frustration funny to you?" *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** I'm laughing. No, it's because... yeah. We recently had an instance where I could have really laughed and giggled, but instead, I was just like, "Yeah, I'm sorry that's really tough. How can I help?"
- Selena:** Yes. I love you for that.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And then we laughed about it later. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Laughter has a timing aspect to it is what you're trying to say.
- Ryan:** Yeah. So we're gonna ask you three questions here about laughter. I think everybody agrees laughter is good. I think every couple of you talk to they're gonna want a friendship that's going to... you feel the joy that comes along with laughter. [00:10:00] And they're gonna understand that we need to maybe laugh a little bit more.
- Selena:** One of the fruits of the spirit is joy. And I think the point of joy is laughter. I don't know that the Bible necessarily says that God laughed, right?
- Ryan:** I think it does actually in some cases. I think it has the context of people basically acting like He's not God, which that's a laughable thing. So big questions here. As you're listening to this, watching this, we want to give you something to take home to your husband and to your wife.
- So here's the first one. Do you feel like you laugh enough in your marriage? And I'm not saying, do you objectively laugh enough? I want to ask more of a subjective question, which feels rare for us. Do you feel like you laugh enough? Are there seasons when you feel like you've laughed more, you've laughed less? Obviously, if you're going through a really tough season, there's going to be less laughter.
- Selena:** But I don't think it has to be nonexistent, right?

Ryan: Well, it's on a case by case.

Selena: Well, because sometimes, you know, we think that laughter might take away from the seriousness of the situation, when really laughter might be that crack in the door for those harder conversations to take place.

Ryan: I mean, in Luke's version of the Beatitudes he's talking about blessed are the low and spirit type of thing for they'll receive joy. So it's almost like an invitation into something different. And it's like, how much agency do we have in that? So I guess the question here is, do you wish you laughed more? If so, how can we talk about that? How can we create a culture of laughter as a couple?

To help answer that question, let's ask another question. Why don't couples laugh together more? Why do you think couples don't laugh together more?

Selena: Well, in our notes here, one of the biggest ones, I think the top one, is just disconnects emotionally, spiritually, mentally. They're just not connected. We don't spend time together. We don't engage with one another. We sit and look at our phones and scroll and stare.

Although we'd have laughed many times about things on the phone, I think our primary... we've been distracted away from each other in that relationship oftentimes and not discipline ourselves to connect with one another. So that lack is going to create this chasm between experiencing things like joy, like laughter together.

Ryan: Yeah. To calibrate this part, I'm trying to think, how do we help couples know, like, how much should they be laughing? Because there are some couples that don't laugh a lot. And that's fine. But then I'm thinking some of the quirky people that we've met and-

Selena: They feel super connected and there's unity and they just don't... Just not funny people.

Ryan: When you were dating and your relationship was young, and it was all kind of fresh, maybe that was a certain level of highness. Is that the right word? If you laugh during that time, I think that's an indication that you probably are a laughing couple. And so the disconnect you're saying could maybe get rid of the laughter that would have otherwise been there.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Okay, another one is hurt. So emotional hurt, which points back to this disconnect. But sometimes we haven't dealt with the emotional hurt or the frustration that's been created by your spouse.

Selena: Right. It's hard to laugh with someone if you've been hurt by them and you haven't reestablished the trust there in the relationship.

Ryan: It's a trust, yeah. Because it's funny when I'm frustrated—and you can speak for yourself—but when I'm frustrated, which is not very often because my wife is awesome, not because I'm long-suffering, *[both chuckles]* but when I'm frustrated, I don't want to laugh because of the trust thing. But I also don't want to like-

Selena: Give your ground.

Ryan: ...let you go. *[both laughs]* I want you to know how I feel.

Selena: That you're grumpy.

Ryan: Because of you. I feel like if I laugh, it kind of like sets you off the hook for whatever I'm upset about. And maybe that's wrong and that's right.

Selena: It lets me off the hook.

Ryan: The hurt does hinder it. Yeah. So how do we deal with that? Well, you can't just laugh it away and act like it's not there, like it's the bottom of it, and actually deal with it.

The third reason couples don't laugh together is generally just a lack of friendship. And that kind of goes with disconnect.

Selena: Right. And I think it's something that gets chipped away over time. You know, again, your new relationship, you're dating and everything is wonderful and great and fun, and you look forward to hanging out, you laugh a lot, you have a good friendship. But oftentimes, you know, after you get married and you start realizing that life is still life even when you're married, although there are amazing parts to be married, there's deep purpose in it, there's also just the day to day grind of being together, working, creating a home.

Those types of... I want to say desires. But those types of just roles and things you have to fulfill can often... if they're not [00:15:00] put in the right place, I think in your heart and in your mind, they can really chip away at the joy and friendship you have and can have in marriage because you get either task-oriented, you get goal-oriented, career-oriented, whatever. Unless we're God-

oriented, our friendships really going to suffer at some level if we're always pursuing something outside of, I think, what the Lord has given us or called us to.

Ryan: Actually that leads to the fourth reason, which is you're heavy laden with burdens. I think there's a direct correlation between how burdened do you feel and how much you're trusting God. Now, does that mean trusting God means you have no worries?

Selena: No.

Ryan: No. It doesn't mean that. I do mean that you don't despair.

Selena: You entrust those worries to God, right?

Ryan: Exactly. It doesn't mean that you're not being so burdened that it's crushing you. But if we are learning to trust the Lord, then we have the burdens, but He carries the burdens for us. Think about when kids laugh. Jesus talked about having faith like a child. Kids laugh a lot, like a ridiculous amount. Yeah. You know, too much. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Be more serious.

Ryan: And here we have a Savior who said "unless you have faith like a child..." Now, He's talking about the simplicity of their faith, the ability for them to take Christ at face value. But I think I don't want to read too much into Jesus saying in that moment everyone should laugh like kids laugh. But there's the attitude of a child, which has this carefreeness.

I remember a moment when I used to love to go cliff jumping. And you were part of that gang. But early on we went to this place-

Selena: Because I wanted to impress you. Now that I've impressed you, I do not enjoy it *[both chuckles]* as much as you do.

Ryan: And I remember laying on a rock in the middle of the Green River, which is here in Washington State. And there's a big gorge and I jumped a bunch and it was hot, and the sun was coming right down into this river gorge. And it was for about an hour in the afternoon. Otherwise, you're in the shade.

I remember laying there just feeling completely and utterly free. And it was so unique. It was so unique in that I've always wondered and wanted for more of that. How do I get to that place of just feeling free? And as adulthood has happened, it's gotten harder and harder to find that freedom unless I can learn

to have faith like a child. Because that freedom as a child was more circumstantial. I actually did have very little to worry about. I wasn't living on my own. I was still dependent on my parents. I had a job, but it was-

Selena: Fun money.

Ryan: It was labor intensive, but I was off of work. It was summertime. No school, no football prep, nothing. Just swimming. So getting to that place, that was a very circumstantial joy. And I think deep faith makes our joy permanent and not circumstantial. And that's what would lead to or hinder laughter.

Selena: And I also want to say to, you know, like you said, we're kind of in the holidays, and that can be a really difficult time for people who are grieving the loss of someone or grieving, you know, the absence of someone, whatever form that takes.

Again, my friend, Mary, she just reminded me in such a sweet way that because of Christ joy and grief can coincide together. Like they can exist together. So we don't have to be afraid to not laugh. We don't have to be afraid to laugh even and when we are grieving the absence of a family member, whoever that may be, right? We can have hope. We can have joy because of Christ. And yes, the burden is still there, the overshadowing of grief can still be there but Christ is more there and He's conquered death.

I don't want to overstep my boundaries because I haven't grieved in such a way of losing someone close like a spouse or a child. So I just want to be sensitive to that to just knowing the power of Christ and the power of knowing that His presence can, I don't know, just kind of fill in those gaps and we can experience the joy of Him while also still grieving and missing the person that is absent. And I think obviously clearly He understands that and He takes joy in comforting us as well.

Ryan: Yeah, and I don't want to be too quick to dismiss the supernatural components of laughter even in the middle of those supreme or really tough times. We have friends who have been through some of the worst tragedies you can imagine. And in speaking with the husband, he explained to me there are days when they laugh together and they're smiling together and they're husband or wife and they're playful. And then there are days when they just cry, still in it. So what do you say to that husband? You say, "Well, why don't you try to laugh more? Like no, he didn't say like you-

Selena: The human emotions [inaudible].

- Ryan:** ...take it as it comes and give it all to the Lord as it comes and you, [00:20:00] I guess, learn and be thankful and seek the joy of the Lord, whether that's joy in sorrow or joy in laughter. Which is really otherworldly to think that joy is detached from laughter or joy is detached from happiness.
- Selena:** Right, right.
- Ryan:** Christian joys is self... I don't wanna say self-sustained because Christ sustains it. But it's unique in that it can be sustained in sorrow and laughter.
- Selena:** Distinctively like that. Yeah.
- Ryan:** So what does laughter do? We've talked about this a little bit. But just quickly, emotionally laughter lightens the heart. This is what we talked about in Proverbs 17:22, which I'll go back up to that and read it if I can find it quickly. Do you see that?
- Selena:** A joyful heart is good medicine.
- Ryan:** A joyful heart is good medicine. It lightens the heart physically. I mean, you can look up articles, we have heard it from the Mayo Clinic, we won't get into it. But physically like it has endorphins, lowers blood pressure, it gets... I want to adventure to say that, you know, widens your blood vessels. *[both laughs]* It's generally healthy. No doctor is gonna say like, "Listen, pal-
- Selena:** "You're laughing way too much."
- Ryan:** "Next time you got laugh you're gonna kill yourself."
- Selena:** *[laughing]* Stop.
- Ryan:** No doctor will say that.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** They'll say, "As much as you can, laugh. It's good for the heart." I mean, think about that, that God has given us laughter as a way to health in one respect. So emotionally, physically, spiritually. We talked about this. Again, joy comes from the Lord.

Romans 15:13 says this: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace." In what? "In believing." In believing. It comes with believing the truth of what Christ did, who He was, what He accomplished, what His resurrection means.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Abound in hope.

Nehemiah 8:10 says this: "The joy of the Lord is my strength." That's kind of we were talking about, how joy has this kind of unique, sustaining character to it, which is beautiful. So how is the joy of the Lord our strength? Like we just said, it's based on the gospel, not on us. We're broken sinners saved by grace, and we can live and rejoice in the love that our Father has - for who? For His servants, for His subjects, the love of God our Father that He has for His children. Amen.

I guess there's a few more verses here. Zephaniah 3:17, "For the Lord your God is living among you, he is a mighty Savior; He will take delight in you with gladness; with His love He will calm all your fears; He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

Selena: I like the word "delight" in there. Oftentimes laughing reflects the delight that you take in your spouse and the delight that you take in your relationship and your marriage that God's given you. So if laughter feels hard, I'm assuming delighting and enjoying your spouse feels just as difficult.

So I think a pathway back to that would be, "Lord, help my heart to see my marriage clearly, help my heart to see my spouse the way you would have me see him, as a wife speaking. Help me to take joy in him, you know, help me to find those moments of joy and those moments of laughter." Not to sweep any sin under the rug, not to overlook any hurts or pains, but to face them together and to rely on the joy of the Lord truly being your strength.

Ryan: This is what the Psalmist is talking about in Psalm 16:11. It says, "You make known to me the path of life, you fill me with joy in your presence; with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Selena: So good.

Ryan: That's an eternal perspective. That's what you're talking about. Isaiah talked about this. He says, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." These are eternal ideas.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Eternal ideas. I'm just thinking of a couple that is maybe-

Selena: I think that's where the joy is differentiated when you were saying it's disconnected from happiness. Sometimes I think happiness can be just a

physical, worldly experience. It is not always the case, but are the joy of the Lord, the anchored joy comes from those eternal things that we look forward to: the eternal promises, the eternal fact that we will be with Him in His presence for all eternity like that. That's got to well up some serious joy inside of your heart. Undeserving, knowing who you are as a sinner, knowing that he saved you. You didn't save yourself. There's nothing that you did. You brought the sin but He grabbed a hold of you, He came to us. [00:25:00]

Ryan: It's occurring to me as we're talking that there's perhaps layers and types of laughter that can be confused on the surface, but they're very different.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: We're talking about a deep joy that could lead to a deep level of contentment and peace, which may precipitate as laughter on some level, whether you're relaxed enough to laugh at something your spouse says, or you laugh literally in the face of whatever you're facing.

And I'm thinking of a couple that maybe doesn't believe in God. I'm thinking of, you know, if you spend time on the internet, you'll see, you know, atheist culture is alive and well and loud. And they say, "We don't need God to laugh. We can laugh at funny movies, we play games, we do all this stuff. We don't need your God to laugh." And I can't help but question, is that laughter a peace-fueled laughter? Is it laughter that comes from a deep like this...?

Selena: Is it a lasting one?

Ryan: It's drawing from the wells of salvation-

Selena: That will never dry up.

Ryan: ...as opposed to just being amused by something that is amusing. To me, there's a difference between funny, there's a difference between joy, there's a difference between amusement. And I fear that a lot of our culture is so used to counterfeit joy in the form of entertainment and amusement and things like that.

I think that's why we're saying this is a secret weapon. Because if you're a couple that values the gospel and you grant to us this premise that laughter is important and that laughter perhaps could be some sort of light on the dashboard of your marriage, if that warning light is coming up because you haven't laughed in a week together, then you can trace that down and say, maybe I'm not drinking water from the wells of salvation or maybe I'm not taking pleasure in the right hand of God, and I'm not going through this

Christmas season or going through whatever season of life, tragic, whatever, stressful. That warning light is coming on.

So it's not, Okay, let's find a watch a funny movie. Let's watch it so we can get over it so we can say we laughed. It's like, "How can I find that deep peace that will then well up ideally, and it will give us the trust and peace and the ability to laugh together the way that we know we can? And that's key.

So we had some ideas. Very, very quickly, how to laugh more as a couple. So tangible ideas. Number one. And this is very, very tangible. Let's smile more.

Selena: I have to honestly consciously think to do that. Because I think I'm just like happy to be whatever. But when I smile at my kids more, like intentionally, they just light up and they respond. So smiling. I think I used to smile at you more because I was wanting to get your attention.

Ryan: I've noticed as the pregnancy has gone on, your intentionality has had to ramp up too. Because you come down in the morning, which you're up early reading scripture and stuff. And if I'm up first and you come down, your face is always like... *[chuckles]*

Selena: It is bright in the morning. Okay? *[both laughs]*

Ryan: And then oftentimes you'll say something that is hilarious.

Selena: It's always good. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: So just simply smile more. Number two: be playful. Joke around.

Selena: Keep it good. Keep it pure. I think joking... No harsh... Yeah. But be playful. Have fun. Know each other. Know what makes each other laugh. I mean, that's just relationship 101.

Ryan: Joking takes two. We've discovered this. Because I will often joke *[Selena chuckles]* and you're not-

Selena: I'm not having it in the moment. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Yesterday I'm out taking care of stuff. We've had an insane number of orders with book orders. By the way, thank you. If you've ordered books, we're working on it our best. But I was out there like hundreds of these orders with our team. And Selena is like, "Should we plan on having you home for dinner?" And I said, "Yeah." And then I left it. And then I was like, "By the way I swept." *[laughs]*

- Selena:** Computron swept. *[Ryan laughs]* He pushed the button for Computron. Just kidding.
- Ryan:** And then I was like, "Also I vacuumed." And I'm expecting you to like roll your eyes or something, just to kind of push back the dialogue. And there was nothing. And then I got home and I was like, "That was a funny joke, wasn't it?" *[laughs]* I just told *[inaudible]* vacuum. *[Selena chuckles]* And you were like, "I was not in the headspace for this." *[both chuckles]* So you got to be playful. I know that that was a unique case-
- Selena:** It was fine.
- Ryan:** Initiate a joke. Receive a joke. You weren't that amused. That's all it came down to. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** But here we are laughing.
- Ryan:** Shock on to myself. Number three: play with your kids. This is one of the clearest, quickest ways-
- Selena:** And guys, we understand playing is hard sometimes. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** It's exhausting. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Selena:** So play with them. Be active with them. Laugh with them. When you laugh with your kids it just boosts their confidence levels, the playing field, they feel so much more attached to you. Number four. We gotta move through these. Really you're gonna say that?
- Ryan:** Watch *The Office*?
- Selena:** Watch *The Office*.
- Ryan:** It's true. Whatever that thing is that you guys connect around that makes you laugh as a couple, whether it's a game.... We know that if we... We don't actually watch much TV because just life is crazy at the moment. But if we do, you know, sometimes we get like half an episode in. And it's funny.
- Selena:** It is.
- Ryan:** And we laugh. And that's one way to kind of *[00:30:00]* grease these kids a little bit. The last one is just know what's funny and what's not. So not all

humor is good. Sarcasm. Honestly, unless you're both are on board with it, sarcasm is a very draining type of humor.

Selena: See, it's a very low form of it, yeah.

Ryan: But sarcasm done between two people who really enjoy it could be very life-giving.

Selena: Really?

Ryan: I don't know. Our good friend John.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: John is the most snarky guy. He's always... Lovell. He's always got stuff to say. He brings up the worst/best in me. And none of its crude, none of its lewd or anything like that. But he makes me think of the most like- *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: I think I apologize to him because I think I criticized him. I was being sarcastic with him.

Ryan: And he loves it.

Selena: And you and Becca were like, "No, this is his love language." And I'm like, "I feel bad for saying these things consistently to him." And he's like, "It's fine." *[laughs]*

Ryan: He can take it. He can take it. And he can dish it, tell you what.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So the encouragement to you is that joy... *[Selena laughs]* Laughter I'd say is, like I said, a light on the dashboard. It can be used as a tool and a secret weapon, as we've called it, to kind of break the ice in some of the difficult seasons in life, to both, I guess, identify the hard things you're going through, but also to kind of push through them.

But laughter for laughter's sake is ultimately vain and it's meaningless. So we're talking about deep joy that comes from having peace with the God of the universe. And if you don't know what that means, what we're talking about is the fact that as people, we aren't perfect. We're sinners. We've sinned. What is sin? Well, sin us is we've transgressed a moral law that God. Transgress means that we've broken the law. We all know in our hearts that

we've sinned, we've done bad things. And God who is the creator of that law requires justice.

Now we don't have peace if we are responsible for making our own sins right. And that's where God's justice will weigh us and crush us. But thankfully God sent His own Son so that His justice might be satisfied.

Jesus lived a perfect life, but then died the death that we should have died. And then didn't stay dead, he rose again, truly, miraculously. It's a miracle because He is God. And then when we place our belief in Him, then our debt is paid. That's where the peace comes from.

I can stand here knowing I'm not perfect, knowing I trust a God who is and that God who loves me. I can take a deep breath, and I can love my wife, and I can know, "Okay, I've messed up, forgive me. Let's move forward." That's a deep peace.

So if you want that deep peace, we want to invite you into relationship with Jesus and trusting Him. The website that we've set up is thenewsisgood.com. We pray that you check that out.

Let's pray. Father God, thank You for the gift of laughter. I pray for these couples that are watching this, listening to this that You would just well up within them a deep gut-level desire to take joy in you, to laugh with one another, to enjoy each other. And I thank you for the gift that it is that it brings so many benefits to our lives. Most of all, Lord, it just is a reminder that you have made our burdens light. We love you for it. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: If you're still watching, thank you. If you want to support us go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. We would really appreciate it. There's lots of good stuff there. Including a special announcement that we've announced last week.

And if you want to know what that exclusive thing is, you have to go there and sign up because it's only for patrons. So fiercemarriage.com/partner. We hope to see you there. This episode of fierce marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Proverbs 15:15
 - Proverbs 17:22
 - Romans 15:13
 - Nehemiah 8:10
 - Zephaniah 3:17
 - Psalm 16:11

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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