

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED AFTER HAVING A BABY

<https://fiercemarriage.com/how-to-stay-connected-after-having-a-baby>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: All right, we're back, Fierce Marriage listeners. Let me just tell you this, adding a new human to the home is a huge change.

Selena: It's great.

Ryan: In fact, we've added a new human to the podcast. You can't see her if you're watching this, nor can you see her if you're listening to this. She's off-camera right now.

Selena: She's down there. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: However, our newest addition, our fourth daughter, may be making a cameo appearance here on the Fierce Marriage Podcast. We have to let fate decide. *[Selena chuckles]* We will soon see.

But today we're talking about this singular topic, and I think it's going to be helpful for us as we reprocess this in real-time. But how do we stay connected as a couple, how do we keep our marriage strong after having a baby? Because like I said, adding a new human to the home is a huge change.

Selena: Well, and we've done this, this is our fourth time and it still is a challenge.

Ryan: It still is a challenge.

Selena: You still have to go through it.

Ryan: The challenges are the same because your other kids are still around and they're adding more to the equation.

Selena: And physically you are dealing with, you know, your body. However you delivered your child, you're still healing in ways. So how do you keep that sex drive fulfilled?

Ryan: Well, I mean, *[inaudible]* it's all about the sex for this one. *[Selena chuckles]* I'm talking about emotional connection.

Selena: Four kids. Come on. That's all you're saying. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Anyway, we're gonna talk about that on the other side.

[00:01:15] <music>

Ryan: Selena, it's good to be back.

Selena: Good to be back.

Ryan: You know, we only missed one week as far as the listeners were concerned.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: But we took like three weeks off.

Selena: Well, and the one week we missed was because our baby was in the hospital, which you can check out what happened on the socials or go to Fierce Parenting Podcast.

Ryan: After we brought her home she had to go back into the hospital.

Selena: She had to back in the hospital, in Children's Hospital, yeah.

Ryan: So check out the Fierce Parenting podcast if you want to hear of that story.

Selena: A bit of scare there.

Ryan: If you're a birth story person, that's for you. We shared that and we also shared-

Selena: A little bit, yeah.

Ryan: A little bit. And we also shared other tangible things on the parenting side.

Selena: Yeah, on the parenting side.

Ryan: As a young parent, this would have been very helpful to me when we had our first daughter.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: Because I felt like we were drinking from a firehose poorly. *[laughs]*

Selena: Can you drink from a firehose nicely?

- Ryan:** You can't really. You just get on the tail end and you get thrown backward. That's what it felt like. I remember that the hormone thing and how that... Like we never, I think, experienced the level of stress that we did like the second day being home with Dela.
- Selena:** With our first?
- Ryan:** Yeah. And that was intense. I remember feeling so blindsided by that. Maybe that's you, maybe you're headed into that season.
- Selena:** Sorry, you hear her. She's here.
- Ryan:** We haven't actually introduced... Do want to grab her? We haven't even said her name. We said her name on the parenting side, which we already recorded. So Selena is going to grab the baby here.
- This is our newest daughter. The Lord has seen it fit to give us four wonderful daughters. This is Sunny [Aletheia?]
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Hi. Hi. That's a bright light, isn't it?
- Selena:** She's very bright and sweet.
- Ryan:** She's very bright and sweet.
- Selena:** She's going on three weeks old.
- Ryan:** This is the marriage podcast. We're the Fierce Family, all right?
- Selena:** It's what happens when you get married.
- Ryan:** This is what happens when you do podcast... This is where kissing leads, everyone. [Selena chuckles] I kissed this girl and boom, babies.
- Selena:** Babies.
- Ryan:** After marriage, of course. After marriage. So let's talk about this. If you are headed into a season of your first baby is about to come or by God's grace, you're pregnant or you hope to be pregnant, or maybe you've had children already and you're hoping to have more or you're pregnant with additional children and you're just wanting to be refreshed in this, let's talk about how to tangibly stay connected after you've had a baby.

- Ryan:** Okay, so let's talk through the risks first. What are the risks, Selena?
- Selena:** The risks of?
- Ryan:** Of having a child and the risks to your marriage of adding a child to your family.
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Granted, we're talking about this but children are a blessing. But it's a bit of a minefield, getting home with the baby for the first time. So the first one, and this is the biggest one, is just disconnection.
- Selena:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely.
- Ryan:** So in what ways do you think disconnection?
- Selena:** Disconnection, I think, gosh, I mean it was such a blur having our first child at home because my body had gone through something that it had never gone through before. And then you have the hormones and all the things. And we knew each... I mean, we've been married 10 years.
- Ryan:** Our first baby?
- Selena:** Our first baby.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** We've been married for a while and we're, you know, best friends and felt like we could finish each other's sentences. But then you throw a newborn in the mix and you're like, why can you not understand words *[Ryan laughs]* that I'm saying right now or the needs that I have? It's just such a minefield [00:05:00] when you are working through being tired and having a baby and eating and all the things, just the necessary basics of life.
- Ryan:** So disconnection emotionally, disconnection, of course sexually.
- Selena:** Yeah, physically.
- Ryan:** Physically speaking, I mean, there's just no way around it. You cannot just go back to business as usual. That takes processing together and not in not... There's a way to do that that I think is more beneficial than other ways to process through those six weeks postpartum. That's the right term, right? Postpartum?

Selena: Postpartum.

Ryan: Okay. There's a vernacular here. I got to make sure that I'm using it right. Okay, another risk, there's a spiritual drought.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: Because you got a new baby, you don't want to expose the baby to crowds. So maybe you won't take the baby to church, which means you might not go to church at all.

Selena: Now you can do it online.

Ryan: Of course, you can do it online. Or you might just feel like you're not getting any sleep, so then your devotional time is suffering, you're not in the Word. You've fallen out of your rhythm because you're at the hospital for three days. Maybe your prayer life is, you know, relaxing. So there's a risk of having a drought spiritually. And not only drought spiritually as an individual, but as a married couple. You stop kind of centering your universe on Christ. And it's really easy to begin to live on our own strength in those moments.

Selena: And it won't last long that strength, let me tell you, especially as a new baby. So there's a lot of potential for times of being in the desert on every level.

Ryan: So disconnection, drought, and then sin. Another risk would be just flat-out just sin. Okay, as a result of the change... Again, we talked about the sexual thing, which we'll talk about more here. But if you're a husband and you are now, okay, my wife is unavailable to me for amazing reasons but I no longer have, I'll say, access to my wife in this way-

Selena: Very temporary.

Ryan: ...and we've talked or whatever, well, now I'm, you know, feeling all sorts of pent-up angst. That's where you could be tempted, you know, more tempted to maybe fall into old habits or to let your eyes wander or let your mind wander, and to just to flat out lust to sin in that way.

Or, you know, another angle for sin would be maybe in your reacting to this new situation. An example of this is maybe losing your temper, saying things out of anger or frustration or impatience toward your spouse or toward your other kids or toward in laws or toward your own extended family. And you just sin in how you behave toward others. We can also sin in ways where we don't trust God or live or walk by faith, right?

Selena: You walk in fear.

Ryan: Yeah. I love that you're just caring for our baby on the podcast.

Selena: Here we go.

Ryan: I love you so much. You're awesome. So there might be other risks but I think those are some of the big ones. Now in the middle of this, and I think it's important to ask ourselves this question. Now, we live in a day and age when this question is grating on us. But we have a standard. We have a God who has given us His Word, He's given us His law, and you know what, you're reading the Scripture, realize His law is good.

Selena: He's given us Himself.

Ryan: His law itself is a form of grace. His revelation is a form of grace. So we need to ask ourselves, in these moments what is required of me? It's not just how can I weather the storm but what is God requiring of us?

Selena: Well, and why?

Ryan: And why, yeah.

Selena: Because He's not just requiring us to empty out, right? For what reason? To what end? So what is He requiring of us and why?

Ryan: So, I'm gonna start with two premises that I think we can all agree on. We want to talk to some scripture really quickly. But here they are. What is required of us? Well, these two premises help us identify that. One, marriage is good. Marriage is good. It's worth protecting, it's worth working towards, worth trying to flourish in it unto the glory of God and the good of us.

The second premise is kids are a blessing. So if marriage is good and kids are a blessing, then we need to work through how to merge these two good things together in a way that's not going to detract from the blessings that they are.

So some verses to consider. Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" So it follows the logic, as the logic goes, it's not good for the man to be alone. Therefore it is good for the man to have a wife. Marriage is good.

This is backed up when Hebrews 13:4. It says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the

sexually immoral and adulterous." The part I want to highlight there is that "Let marriage be held in honor." It's an honorable thing. It's a good thing.

Proverbs 18:22, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord." You are a favor from the Lord to me. You are a good thing to me and our marriage is a good thing. [00:10:00]

And finally, you all know this verse. Psalm 127:3, "Children are a blessing and a gift from the Lord."

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So if after the child arrives your marriage suffers, it's not the kids' fault.

Selena: Your child is no less a gift.

Ryan: Your child is no less a gift. The situation is no less, no less a blessing.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Here's the caveat. Obviously, no one is sitting there thinking, "You know what? Kid, it's your fault that I'm really frustrated right now." Like they're not blaming the child.

Selena: But you can get resentful towards them. Your heart can get bitter and hard towards the little baby.

Ryan: Or toward, you know-

Selena: Or towards each other.

Ryan: ...toward your wife who now is... If your wife is a new mother, like she is going to be tending to this child... I remember with our first daughter, I thought, "I have to share my wife now with this little jabroni?" *[both laughs]* I was not happy. God had to do some sanctification, right? I was used to having her for almost a decade. I was used to having my wife all to myself.

Selena: And I was just having me all to myself. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Yeah! Oh my goodness, there's a lot of selfishness that gets uprooted in those seasons.

Selena: We have sanctification. God is making you more holy. Embrace it. Embrace the discipline,-

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: ...embrace the change because it is a blessing. And again, there's deeper purpose. Seeds are being planted, growth is happening. Sin is breaking and falling off of you. So praise God.

Ryan: So with marriage being good, children being a blessing, I think the imperative here is we must not, okay, we must not mishandle the blessings of God. And to do that, I think the one key we have at our disposal is wisdom. Right? We have wisdom. We need to look to God's Word. We need to act wisely-

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: ...and to see things accurately. Here's kind of the progression of wisdom as I conjured it here when I wrote this rundown, is that we need to see things accurately, we need to think clearly, plan accordingly and then execute or act diligently. Of course, all of this is by the grace of God, by walking in step with the Spirit.

Selena: Yeah. And I think it is hard, you know, to think clearly when you're super tired and to see things accurately. But part of I think combating that is like what you said, is to plan accordingly. If it's your first kid, you know, you're not gonna know what to expect. We bought a pack-and-play because we're like, "Oh, the kid will sleep in that. Well, our kid did not sleep in that."

Ryan: One time.

Selena: Barely slept in a crib. *[Ryan laughs]* Like, wanted, to be honest, the first couple months, right? So have grace for yourself. Know that as clearly as you think you might be seeing something, he might be seeing something more clearly than you. So talk, be gracious, be humble in how you communicate to one another.

Ryan: And we will talk through how to anticipate and how to have this conversation.

Selena: There's a right way to be able to do that.

Ryan: And we'll do it from the perspective of it maybe being your first child because I think it applies across the board from that starting point. But I want to look at some wisdom versus first because I just want to get these fresh in our minds. The one that came to mind as I was writing this, I thought, look to the ant, O you sluggard, and grow and be wise. Look to the ants.

Why does that jump out at me because... That's Proverbs 6:6. Because an ant is a tiny creature that somehow she organizes herself in a way to amass enough food and shelter and things so that in a time when there is no food she eats a plenty. Right? That was the takeaway from that. I think Proverbs 6 is where that's brought up.

There's other verses here. Again, it's funny how wisdom and sluggishness or foolishness and folly is more associated with lack of diligence whereas wisdom is diligent. Wisdom works and folly to kind of rest on its laurels.

So Proverbs 6:9 says this, "How long will you lie there, O slacker? When will you get up from your sleep?" Proverbs 10:26, "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the slacker to those who sent him." I like the word slacker the translations. Proverbs 23:19, "Listen, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart on the right course." Notice how there's a guiding of one's heart is correlated to that person being wise.

Proverbs 26:16, "The slacker is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly." So there's a lot more that can be said around this. But the whole point is we need to seek wisdom and act wisely. Think wisely. Think clearly. Plan wisely. Act wisely.

Now how can we do that? That of course is gonna take some prayer and some work on your own end. You gotta be in God's word.

Selena: Yeah, being in God's word and having brothers and sisters that have walked the path ahead of you that can help, you know, say, Hey, these might be some of the pitfalls around you, so prepare yourself and let's get a plan in place so we can help you as your community, as your, you know, whatever they might be in the body of Christ to you.

Ryan: And remember, we're trying to... How do we bring a new child into our marriage, into our family without letting it in disarray our connection as husband and wife. That's the goal here. So, acting wisely, the first thing we already touched on was to anticipate. [00:15:00] So this is us helping you anticipate.

If you've never had a kid, hello, anticipate. Think about this in advance because it is going to change some things. Now it is by and large 100% a blessing and we would never take anything back. So we're not trying to rain on your parade or tell you like, well, you're really in for it. No. Parenting is awesome. We love doing it. Kids are awesome. I wish I would have done this sooner. But I wouldn't want different kids. *[Selena chuckles]*

- Selena:** God is sovereign. God is sovereign.
- Ryan:** I love what you said when we started. He's brought us along the way. But anticipate. So how you anticipate will obviously depend on your experience. Like for this one, we were kind of like, "Number four, we will figure it out." We know it's gonna be a little different but we also know we'll figure it out, we'll settle into something new.
- Selena:** And we talked about, you know, a few things beforehand. So, again, yeah, knowing that you will settle into some sort of rhythm. But what that rhythm is if it's your first child may look different than what you expect. And that's okay. And you just grow into it. Allow grace for yourself, have people that will come alongside you as well and encourage you in that.
- Ryan:** So we're going to assume that this is your first kid, and you're headed home, you just got discharged from the hospital, you're driving home, like maybe like us where we drove back roads the entire way with our first daughter. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** He did. I was just in the backseat.
- Ryan:** I could have taken the freeway, I could have taken the highway, I took the back roads, the side streets the entire way. So if that's you, here's some things to anticipate.
- Newness, uncertainty. You're gonna have to figure stuff out. There's no way around it. No one knows what it's truly like until you're home and you're settled and you've had some time to figure things out. Now, Lord willing, you have a safe, warm, dry place to do that where you can be together working that out.
- We had our little apartment down in California when we used to live down there. And I remember being there and we were just in our jammies the entire time and we're just like, "I guess she's hungry. Let's give her some food." Or she's like three days old and I'm like, "Do we give her the puree?" You're trying to figure out like pumping and all that kind of stuff-
- Selena:** Nursing and all that stuff.
- Ryan:** Nursing. So just know that is gonna be new and that's okay. And just be ready for the uncertainty. Now, I'm okay kind of flying by the seat of my pants. I think you're okay doing that too most of the times.

- Selena:** Yeah, a general rule to just for mom, new moms is don't get on social media at like two or 12 in the morning, 2 a.m. *[Ryan laughs]* because nothing good will come from that. And you'll be asking questions you shouldn't be asking and things you shouldn't be looking at and searching for. I'm just saying about like, okay, newness of motherhood. Don't be in that very tired mindset looking at these things.
- Ryan:** And we've talked about ad nauseam on the parenting side, this idea of like mothers can be such a vicious crowd. Moms to moms.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Like they have such strong opinions about things. Things like how your kid should sleep, what your kid should eat.
- Selena:** Because of their own experience.
- Ryan:** Right. Right. Because, you know, they're doing the compassionate thing by telling you that co-sleeping is gonna kill your child. Selena can't defend the nuanced view of what I just said. So I'm gonna keep it. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Most countries do co-sleep with their kids. That has been something we do.
- Ryan:** We struggle with that.
- Selena:** And we've struggled with shame in that area.
- Ryan:** We've struggled with that because we've taken a very open approach to how our kids sleep. Like whatever lets people sleep the most, that's what we're going to do.
- Selena:** Which is something I learned on the internet.
- Ryan:** As long as it's safe... But the trouble is, is that if you go down certain rabbit, you're gonna feel pressured to parent a certain way or using certain solutions, certain devices, and that's going to add feelings to the mix that maybe would not have been interjected otherwise.
- Selena:** They're not productive. Yeah, they're not helpful. They're just added pressure. So know yourself. Know your kids, and know your own, I guess thresholds, boundaries, capabilities.
- Ryan:** I was gonna say know God's truth because I feel like-

- Selena:** That first, of course.
- Ryan:** ...if you know, the truth in terms of... So like we don't have anything... Again, this is the fierce family channel here. Sunny girl.
- Now, unfortunately, and maybe this is a good thing. God gave us His complete word. So He saw fit to not give us prescriptions for how to sleep and help our kids sleep. He didn't give us prescriptions for how many drops of essential oil to put in the thing or what kind of diapers to use, the disposable or the non-disposable-
- Selena:** Can you imagine being an Israelite in the desert with-
- Ryan:** You have to talk really loud.
- Selena:** Can you imagine being an Israelite in the desert with like the 12 children, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah. These were hardy women, right?
- Selena:** Yes! The babies just in sackcloth or whatever they had.
- Ryan:** So don't take yourself so seriously with those things. And learn to replace lies with truth. And the lie could be you're a bad mom or you're a bad dad. And say, "You know what? God has not given me this child for me to fail with this child. He's called me to disciple this child. He's called me to care for this child. And He's also promised to provide for me and this child.
- Selena:** I would say write some of these things down beforehand, these promises of God and know His truth and have that posted for you. Because I think just leading up to the end unknown [00:20:00] and the unexpected, those truths are very anchored. And they become even more true for you as you walk through some of the hazards and fussiness of, you know, babies.
- Ryan:** We don't know anything about fuzziness. No, she's actually doing good. Never mind! *[both laughs]* So anticipate these things. Again, if you can do these before your child arrives, this is what anticipation means. You're going to experience newness. There's gonna be pressures that maybe you didn't anticipate. We'll try to anticipate that the pressures at least will be there. *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** And you won't know that they are.
- Ryan:** Just know that the pressures are out there and they're gonna hit. And then try to defuse those bombs before they go off. Hormones-

- Selena:** Not real. Just kidding. They're totally real.
- Ryan:** No one told us about the hormone thing and the hormone crash.
- Selena:** The hormones. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** The hormones. The crash that you experienced as a mother and what that does for your emotions and your even ability to think rationally. And I'm not trying to dismiss what you-
- Selena:** How dare you! No, there's definitely a real part to that. And I've honestly had to remind him and remind myself, "Hey, I don't know if this these are emotions or hormones or what but this is what I'm feeling and I need you to help me filter through this. Is this an accurate perspective of what is happening around me or is this just literally in my head?" He's a very good help with that.
- Ryan:** But the thing is, is if you're not dialoguing in that process, then the husband can come off as hyper-rational and uncaring. But if the wife, on the other hand, is not willing to listen to truth and grab on to the truth over a very prominent emotion, then where are they left? So there has to be this joint discussion of what is truth, let's grab on to the truth. And I'm gonna sit with you in this emotion, I'm sorry that you're feeling this way. Thank God that we had the truth.
- Selena:** And I'm going to help lead you out of this emotion as well lovingly. Not ignoring you, not dismissing you, not shaming you, or making you feel guilty, but say, Hey, here's God's truth, how can we apply it right here and now?
- Ryan:** Another thing to anticipate: sexual tension. It's real. And if you came into having the baby and you had a fairly healthy sex life and a frequency that was working for you, then all sudden, all that's going to be blown out of the water.
- Selena:** It'll be gone.
- Ryan:** It's going to be gone. And for six months-
- Selena:** Six weeks. *[Ryan laughs]*
- Ryan:** Thank God it's not six months. For six weeks, that would be just a nightmare.
- Selena:** Amen. Amen.
- Ryan:** The Lord will have to sanctify-

Selena: No, I will have to say, I mean, I just speak for the woman, like, you do feel so connected. You can in your pregnancy. You know, there are also hormones that make you want to have more sex when you're pregnant. And it's good. But then when that goes away-

Ryan: It's very good.

Selena: ...and you're not connecting as much as you were before. I mean, for me, that's been kind of a struggle for us. I miss being close, I miss that connectedness, that intimacy, and there's just this trust and hope. And it facilitates so much security in your marriage and unity.

So I think that when that is just taken away for a time period, it can really create a lot of just tensions in other areas of insecurities, you're starting to question things, you're feeling hurt and reasons unbeknownst to him because you haven't communicated that or you don't even know how to communicate that. So again be gentle with each other and be gracious towards each other.

Ryan: It's good. So what do you do about that? Well, we'll talk about how to plan around sexual tensions. But just anticipate that that's going to come and you'll have to do with that.

Another one—we get through these quickly—is chaos. Having a new baby at home can be very chaotic, especially if the baby's colicky, if the baby's crying, you don't know how to help to stop the crying. I remember when we brought our firstborn home, we had a little Jack Russell Terrier. We still have him. He's much older now. But he could not handle the baby crying. He would whine and he was frantic and it was like the most disruptive thing in his little mind.

And then he became erratic and we just had to put him in the closet in a kennel so he couldn't hear the baby. And even then he would whine and howl and I almost lost my mind. But we had to mitigate that chaos.

Selena: And I'm crying saying, "We're gonna get rid of the dog and we have a baby and we've had this dog for 10 years and I love him."

Ryan: This was the hormone crash. *[laughs]*

Selena: He's still with us. There's gonna be some stressful moments.

Ryan: I tolerate him. I tolerate Bentley.

Selena: And our children love him.

- Ryan:** Okay, whatever. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Our first child loves him. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Speaking of other kids, they can add to the chaos. They can also act out in some ways if they feel like they're being dethroned.
- Selena:** Not can. They will act out. There is transition time.
- Ryan:** So as a couple now, we talked about on the parenting side, but as a couple, how do you handle the kids acting out? Well, you present a unified front. You say how are we going to disciple our kids through this? We can't just be reactive all the time. [00:25:00] Let's have a plan. Let's figure out how we're going to talk to them.
- Selena:** We just read in Titus... No, not Titus, Timothy, this morning about how, you know, leaders in the church are one wife and they're in control of their household and their children. So I don't think you have to be an elder in the church, but just as a man of God, stepping into that and dictating and ruling over your children so that there is...
- I've had to lean on him so much for our day-to-day parenting over the last couple of weeks just because I can't always be in the moment where discipline and discipleship and training needs to happen because baby is screaming, there's a poopy diaper, something's happening. So thank goodness, he's been able to be around. You know, plan for that with... And men, that is just one way you bless your wives, just stepping up and taking control. That's an encouragement, not a-
- Ryan:** That's good. So we're anticipating all these things. Now all this anticipation is worthless, I'll say, if we don't actually turn it into a battle plan or an action plan if you're feeling less combative. *[chuckles]*
- So how do we plan out of here? Here's what I'm gonna say. If you've not had the child yet, you have a great opportunity to talk about it beforehand. If you have recently had a child and you haven't talked about it, then you can go ahead and make a plan. Now, it's going to take a little bit of extra effort if you've got a baby in the mix.
- But we need to talk talk talk about these things. So many times couples assume like we should just kind of... they're feeling all these things are not actually talking through how to anticipate, how to tackle these various problems together and you have to create a plan. So talk beforehand.

Now, what does the plan actually include? I'm gonna give you a whole laundry list of things here. Okay, the first one, how are you going to communicate, number one, in your plan? What's our communication going to look like? In other words, how are we going to prioritize talking? When are we going to do it? Where are we going to talk? How often are we going to talk? How long are we expecting to converse?

Selena: Are there some key questions that we need to have every time that we talk?

Ryan: What will we talk about? How can I check in with you, wife? As your husband, how can I ask you questions that will connect us faster? I don't need to continually be searching. Like help me help you. *[both chuckles]* So that's communication. How are you going to communicate?

The second one is logistics. So, again, you anticipated all this chaos, all these things. Logistically, how will your lives change? Who will take care of blank, right? So live stuff. I've taken upon myself to cook a lot of the dinners and to do the dishes mostly. Selena is also a rock star and she'll pick up the slack out of Bible study one night. You did the dishes, surprisingly. I told you didn't have to do them but you did them anyway because they're awesome. So who's gonna take care of... And that's maybe some simple stuff.

Selena: But it all adds up after a while if you're...

Ryan: Sorry, you got to talk to the mic.

Selena: It all adds up after a while. So it's good to divvy these things up and understand and have grace for each other if time just gets away from you, right?

Ryan: Yeah. Yeah. I can help. I can help you can sit closer, if you want. *[laughs]* We're trying to stay closer. *[both laughs]* Allan, you can keep all this stuff.

Selena: Oh my goodness!

Ryan: So logistics. Okay, so how will you handle things like diapers, baths? This might seem simple, like, we'll figure it out as we go. Why not talk about it?

Sleeping arrangements. We mentioned that a little bit. How are you gonna handle the nights when...? Who's going to be up with the baby when the baby needs to be fed? Selena has nursed all of our children. And that's kind of just decided it for us.

But what has changed is now I'm in charge of all the other kids because we still have young kids. They still love getting out of bed. Last night, in fact, we ended up with two kids. I was flanked on both sides by a 6-year-old and a 3-year-old. And I didn't even know they were there until... I thought a 3-year-old does a six-year anyway, I was really confused. But it's kind of my job to make sure that they don't wake... because you were there. That they don't wake this one up. They don't wake mom up. So I'll do a lot of shuffling and taking back to beds.

Selena: I still woke up. But it's fine.

Ryan: I know. There's a lot of grace in these moments. And keep in mind you can't plan for it all. So you kind of have to leave room to roll with it. We're running out of time. We got to get through the rest of these.

Another thing to consider is what's your work situation look like? Now not everybody gets maternity and paternity leave. Now you have to have that conversation. How are you going to prioritize your family while also not forsaking the provision of your family?

Now, men, we are called to provide for our families. Now, if you can, take some time off, be with your young baby, be with your bride as she's adjusting to this. If you can't take that time off then I would just encourage you to talk through, you know, other ways that you can fill in the gaps so she feels like you're not just running off to work because it's like an escape for you. Right? That you're not running from your family. Instead you're running to provide for your family.

Here's the big one. [00:30:00] How can your plan include sex? Okay. We mentioned this earlier, but intercourse isn't usually... I mean, doctors aren't going to tell you to wait to have intercourse for six weeks. And it could be longer if it's a more violent delivery. Is that the right word? I think all deliveries are violent on some level, to be honest. It's crazy, but God is gracious in it. And it's beautiful too. *[laughs]*

So how will you handle this elephant in the room, sex, and sexual desire? Men, how will you guard your integrity in your mind? How will you guard the integrity of your actions, the things that you put your eyes on? How will you guard yourself? How do you guard yourself by talking to your wife about these things and processing with her?

Another question for the men is, how is this an opportunity for you to be self-sacrificial and serve your wife and not let this become a point of bitterness? And yeah, you can say, of course, I'm not gonna expect anything from my wife.

And I don't think any good husband would. But somehow that can turn into a root of anger or bitterness or resentment. And now I feel disconnected because I'm not connecting in a way that really speaks to my heart or whatever.

And for the women, I don't want to say these ones. *[laughs]* Do you want to say it?

Selena: Wives, how can we be available to our husbands if the actual physical act is not something that we can do? I said, I think on the parenting side, a couple of words would be: plan ahead, be creative and talk. Like talk, talk, talk. Are there things that you feel okay about that you want to do with your husband that don't involve, you know, the areas of where you've delivered a child?

Some women takes longer than others to kind of... Again, you've got hormones and everything, but what is God's truth? How can I stand on that? How can we stay unified in this area and stay close in this area? So talk. There are other ways, again, to be creative and to plan ahead.

But also, you need to understand that... I don't know how to say this graciously. But I miss being with him and I maybe you don't feel that but I pray that you would feel that. I know with our first couple kids, it was like, Oh, kind of a break from that duty. But as I've grown older, I would say that, and this is maybe just a personal lesson, that intimacy in that time together is just irreplaceable. And our love for one another has just grown so much.

So I want to get back to that. I miss being with him. I miss the closeness. I miss the unity. I miss just spiritual defense that I think sex provides in a marriage. Again, are there ways that I can give to my husband because I want to, because I love him, and I miss him not out of duty and gosh, I guess I just have to take care of him? You know, it's just not that.

And if it is, I've been there and there are the struggles and there still are days where there's those struggles, but the Lord help me to desire my husband in the right way.

Ryan: So I just wear extra tight pants when I'm doing the dishes.

Selena: He does. There you go. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: I want to say a quick caveat. Husbands, your integrity is on you. So if your wife is not available to you and she's working through the emotional side and maybe you haven't figured out the other ways to find sexual release or you've not gotten there yet emotionally or she's not... your integrity is on you.

And what I mean by that is it's not her fault if you stumble and look at porn. That's the point I want to make. It's not on her. Now, it's on you to talk to her through that and say, "I'm feeling tempted. I know that this is something that we're working through together. And I don't want to put heavy expectations and guilt on you but I need you to know as my wife that I'm really struggling with temptation right now.

Like that's what an emotionally mature, spiritually mature man will do is they will go to their bride who is his helper, and say, "I need your help in this area. I know that maybe it's not the help that I really need, really want." But there's other ways that maybe I can ask you for help without heaping shame or guilt or expectation. Is that fair to say?

Now on those veins, this was unique for this pregnancy. I'll just say this, and I will stand by the statement, I think pregnant sex is some of the best sex you're going to have. That's been our experience, right? I don't know what it is but there's something about it that is just incredible.

We're being very transparent here. I guess that's us. I remember in the months leading up to delivery, and you said to me, you said, [00:35:00] "Remind me of this," is what you said. Because I know that there's going to be that hormone change and I don't..."

Selena: I don't know what it's gonna feel like or look like.

Ryan: But remind me how good it can be and how good it is to connect together. So as a husband, now we're three weeks in after the baby came, in week one I'm like, "Should I remind her now." *[both laughs]*

Selena: "Is it time?"

Ryan: I had to kind of work through that. I think whatever that looks like for you the key is just to be really transparent with one another and have the emotional maturity to recognize kind of the storm on the horizon, and call it out for what it is, and talk about it. So I think this is an encouragement for you there.

Again, back to the sexual logistics thing, be creative, and have fun. Try not to take it too seriously. And just know that there's a very real physiological thing to it that just kind of needs to be addressed. The last one-

Selena: And you can connect through it, women.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: There's ways to connect even if you aren't able to climax or experience, you know, being one and unified. There's definitely ways you can feel close to each other. Again, be creative.

Ryan: Well said. I appreciate you saying that. The final one here in terms of how to plan is community. All right, so how will you lean into your community to help make logistical ends meet-

Selena: With bringing a baby home.

Ryan: Yeah. Sorry, bear with me. They're tracking. So bringing the baby home in terms of food. You know, anticipate that chaos. How can you leverage...? Not leverage. That sounds like you're taking advantage. But how can you really lean into your friends and family in terms of the logistical needs that you have as a family? And if you have just the one, then it's going to be more probably around meals, around things like that, I don't know.

Selena: Giving mom a chance to shower or rest, you know, coming in holding the baby or coming over and doing dishes. I remember going to a friend's house, we brought doughnuts. They had other kids. And I just did their dishes. She's like, "You don't have to do that." I was like, "Well, I'm going to do that."

Ryan: And some had done that for us.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: When we came from the hospital our fridge had been cleaned. *[both laughs]* Which I don't know how many years it's been. *[laughs]* I'm kidding.

Selena: For two years.

Ryan: It's been two years. No, just like the top shelf, you know, it gets all the stuff on it. Somebody had cleaned the top shelf in the fridge. It was probably *[inaudible]*. Thank you, friend, which is awesome. So how can you really lean into your community, into your family, and around those logistical needs?

And here's the final encouragement. So we've anticipated, we've created a plan for staying connected after having a baby. And now the final encouragement is this: execute the plan, stick to the plan, revisit the plan as needed. But don't deviate by default.

Because what a lot of times we can have these grand ideas in our mind that we're gonna do this, that, or the other. And then when it actually the rubber

meets the road, we can be tired, lazy, distracted, busy, we can just spend too much time on our phones when really we could be connecting and talking about this sort of thing.

But instead, it's easier to scroll through whatever app we're on. All that can lead us to forsake the commitments that we've made to one another in the plan. So this is encouragement is this: be wise in your execution. It's not wise to know the right thing to do and still you do the wrong thing. That's part and parcel with just foolishness at large. That is foolishness.

So anticipate your needs, make the plan, be wise enough to stick to the plan, and then be wise enough to adjust the plan if it's not working. I think you can reserve the right to adjust the plan at any point. And here's the caveat. Always just talk through it. Talk, talk, talk, execute faithfully with wisdom.

So here's the conversation challenge for you. If this episode applies to you, meaning that if you're headed into a new season of having a new child, your challenge is to make a plan as soon as you can. Make the plan and talk through that.

And honestly, friends, it's not a survival thing. This is a time for you as a couple to become more unified, to be more of the two as one picture, to be more as the dim reflection of Christ loving the church and the church glorifying Christ. And that beautiful picture of the gospel and marriage is how can you serve and love one another selflessly in the middle of what... I just love the picture that it is to watch...

As a husband I get to watch my wife literally your body is broken, to bring forth life. And the picture that that is of the gospel and how you love and give of yourself selflessly to our child and then to participate in how I can love you selflessly as you do the same to our child. And somehow you love me as well.
[00:40:00]

It's such an opportunity, you guys, to just experience the wonderful grace of God and the wonderful love of God in Christ. So we're inviting you into that. It's not an obligation, it's an invitation.

And in that vein, if you don't know the love of God in Christ, if you're not a Christian, if you haven't placed your faith in Him, and what I mean by that is, we are all sinners, we have all done things that offend God because He is holy, He is perfect, and He is completely just in His wrath toward sinners. It's hard for us to wrap our heads around. He's love, but He's also just and He's holy. And we have transgressed his holiness and we've sinned against Him.

And we are not in good standing with God until we place our faith in Christ who was a perfect God-man who lived the perfect life and died the death that we should have died. He didn't stay dead, He rose again. That's the gospel.

So if you want to know what it means to become a Christian, we have a website set up for you. It's thenewsisgood.com. It lays it out basically there and give you some steps down that path.

You wanna pray? Okay. Lord God, I thank you for the gift of children. Thank you that we get to have four daughters, these lovely blessings that they are. Lord, I thank you that you're gracious as we figure this stuff out. I pray that you would use our meager efforts, what we've learned from your word, that you'd use us to help the couples who are maybe headed into the season or in the season right now. I pray that you help them to act wisely, to act faithfully, diligently, to communicate well and clearly. Help them love one another selflessly. Help them pursue you in the middle of it all.

Lord, I pray they get to the other side of maybe the toughest season, the toughest parts of the season, and they get the other side not having drifted away from each other, not having fallen apart as a marriage, but instead by drawing nearer to one another and growing stronger as a couple, Lord. We ask that you'd do all these things in your precious Name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, friends, thank you so much for joining us. This has been a joy. It's good to be back in the saddle. But that said we'll see you again in about seven days. This episode... I messed it up. I haven't done it in a while. This episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Genesis 2:18
 - Hebrews 13:4
 - Proverbs 18:22
 - Psalm 127:3
 - Proverbs 6:9
 - Proverbs 10:26
 - Proverbs 23:19.
 - Proverbs 26:16

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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