

STARTING A ONE MATCH FIRE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/starting-a-one-match-fire>

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Ryan: All right, Selena we're getting back into the swing of things with the Fierce Marriage podcast. We still have our little sweet baby Sunny. She's over there. She's down below. She may make another cameo appearance. She made her first appearance last week. And we're gonna kind of continue our conversation from last week.

We talked about how to stay connected when you bring a new baby home. And that has lots of ways that you stay connected emotionally, spiritually, physically, even-

Selena: Communicationally.

Ryan: Communicationally. *[Selena laughs]* So today we're going to talk about that more on the intimacy side of things. And this will apply for not just bringing a baby home but really any situation where the conditions are averse to building what we're calling a one-match fire.

Now, the fire in this instance is going to be your intimacy. And fire is good. It warms us. In the right context, it can be warming, it can be nourishing, comforting. But it's not always easy to start a fire especially if you're out in the wilderness in a survival situation, which having a new baby sometimes feels that way. And other situations can feel that way as well. So we're gonna cover the details of a one-match fire on the other side.

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Ryan: Welcome back, folks. Ryan here. This is my lovely wife Selena. We are the Fredericks. We are the Fierce Family on YouTube. If you haven't subscribed to us here and or there if you're listening, make sure you go there.

If you're listening to this, this is the Fierce Marriage Podcast. This is the marriage side of the ministry that God has given us to steward for the time being. We also do parenting episodes every Thursday. We'd love for you to join us there.

Today, Selena, we're talking about this one match fire. Now, where did you get this idea? *[laughs]*

Selena: I did not have this idea. This was something that he shared with me because he's been writing some fiction for our girls. And hopefully it will be written and out there for the world in the next year. But he's been reading about how to write, right, because that's something that we need to be good at. It's kind of our trade and it's not something that comes easily and naturally for us. So how do we do this well? So he came across this idea of a one-match fire.

Ryan: Well, it has to do with survival. I like to have a craft book always in rotation. Selena knows this. I'm always reading something about writing, whether it's fiction, nonfiction, or just generally how to articulate ideas in an effective way, because you want to communicate well. I don't want to waste my time for writing. We want to do it as well as I can.

Selena: And we don't want to waste your time.

Ryan: Neither waste the reader's time. So I'm always reading a book about the craft, so to speak. And this particular author is from Oregon, which we're in the Pacific Northwest and I immediately know what she's talking about.

She's like, as a kid, we grew up camping. And whenever you camp in the northwest, like 90% of the time you're gonna be in some situation where you're getting wet because you're in the mountains. We have the Marine, you know, layer coming in, and we have the just the humidity and the cold and the conditions for rain.

So she said, A lot of times what they would be challenged with is lighting a one-match fire, and immediately I knew what she was talking about. But you may not know what I'm talking about. What that means is sometimes in a survival situation or camping situation will say, you need to start a fire with just what you have on hand or what you can gather from the near vicinity in a situation that is averse to lighting a fire.

So what you need to do is you prepare it in a way that you have kind of the easy burning stuff at the bottom, the tinder, the dry kind of stuff that will ignite really quickly. You can light that with another layer above it and layer and layer and it gets thicker and the wood gets denser, and it might even get a little bit damper, knowing that if you have the little fire, it'll feed off it and it'll grow. So basically there's one match you can light because you only have about 10 seconds with the match. And you can light this fire and it will grow.

So I got to think like, that's very similar to, I feel like, times when you're in marriage you feel like you might be in a survival situation or maybe outdoors, so to speak, situation and your intimate life does not seem like the conditions of your marriage are conducive to having healthy, intimate life. So I came up

with this. I thought, Let's talk about that. Let's bring that idea and apply it to marriage and hopefully some couples will find it helpful.

Selena: Well, it's a pretty hot topic for us right now because she's almost four weeks old tomorrow actually. So we're kind of working through some of this ourselves. You know, staying connected. How can we kind of gather that tinder, find the materials that we have in hand right now, and use those to continue to kind of keep the warmth and closeness with each other when we can't, you know, kind of just hop in the sack and, you know, enjoy life together, you know? There's other ways but I guess... yeah.

Ryan: There's a good caveat here too, is that we're not trying to create a bonfire, okay? Because there's situations where... I'm talking about intimately speaking. In a situation where you're just trying to stay warm, you're trying to maybe cook a good meal, you just need a solid fire. [00:05:00]

When your marriage is in a really strong place, and you have maybe a two-story house, so to speak, instead of a tent, again, we're using analogies back and forth. But if you're living in a house and have running water, you have, you know, warmth, you have dryness, then you can start planning, okay, how can we actually go and have a nice, big bonfire?

I mean, in those times your marriage is healthy and conditions are stable, that's when you can, I think, make great strides and advances in your intimate life together. You can be exploring each other, so to speak in ways that are maybe new. That would be like a bonfire, and having just a grand ol' time. *[both chuckles]*

But when you're in a different time outside, so to speak, you just need a warm fire. And I want to make that distinction. We're not trying to get to the raging bonfire level here. We're just trying to maintain some warmth, stay connected, stay healthy, and be intentional about that, about letting the conditions just drench us and leave us out in the cold.

Selena: Right. So some of these external factors, you know, we keep talking about us bringing a baby home, because it's a new sort of stress and you are-

Ryan: A fourth time through for us, but it's new for this season.

Selena: There's still a child that needs to be fed and changed and then there's three others. And then there's also, you know, maybe one or both of you is just stressed out about either work, or career, maybe your kids is extracurricular, schedules are just crazy, you're kind of just heading into a busy season.

Another one might be just you have big decisions on the horizon. You know, maybe you're considering a move geographically, or you're considering a career change, or maybe even a church change. I mean, there's a lot of big decisions and things to kind of pray through, to sort through. And that can cause a lot of conversation and but not necessarily conversation that may even bring you closer and make you want to, you know, start that fire. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: [inaudible] one more to it is that maybe you know and you're acknowledging both of you knowing, hey, we are not particularly prone to connecting right now. We're having communication problems. Like that, to me is like a survival situation as well, where it's not necessarily imposed on you, but you're having kind of this environment in your marriage that you know is not conducive to building a fire.

Selena: Have a cold snap. We've talked about those before.

Ryan: And even those moments, I think you can say to one another, We can agree that this is a tough thing that we're going through, we can also agree that intimacy is important. Can we agree to work on just keeping some semblance of a fire in place?

Now you have to be extraordinarily good communicators and emotionally mature to be able to say that to one another without erupting in a fight or just clamming up and shutting down. Actually, we have communication books coming out in the coming months that will hopefully help that process. Because communication is the linchpin in all this. I wanted to add that to the mix of maybe an adverse condition that a couple might face.

Selena: Yeah. I mean, you still have to be an extraordinarily good communicator. I mean, I do think you need to have a lot of grace for one another when you're talking about these topics. So we may not always be great at it. I think you and I even fall short of course many times.

Ryan: Grace is one of the markers of an extraordinary communicator.

Selena: I agree.

Ryan: You need to have grace for yourself, one another, and the situation.

Selena: I'll take that. I'll take that. So we talked about some of the external factors that might make the conditions not ideal for starting a fire, keeping that fire going to maintain warmth, to maintain health. So what are some of the materials? So what are some of the things that are in our hands right now that we can

use no matter what the environment is? So the external circumstances. What are some of those anchors and materials that we can use?

Ryan: What is within our immediate reach as a couple to help make that fire startable? The first one, to me, it's the one thing that keeps us, I think, close.

Selena: Together no matter what.

Ryan: And it's the easiest fire for us to start and to burn this material is to stay in God's Word together. If we are consistently in God's word, not separately and we're just both doing our own devotional thing, but we are-

Selena: Sitting down together.

Ryan: ...sitting down, we set aside time in the morning, I mean, the baby is kind of throwing a wrench in the gears there but-

Selena: We're getting back to it. We're getting back to it.

Ryan: Sometime between six o'clock and eight o'clock in the morning, depending on the circumstance we're sitting down. We have our two chairs, and we have our Bibles, we're facing the same table and the Bibles are open, we're reading through the same plan.

And inevitably, we end up talking about the text, we end up connecting on whatever issues are on our hearts. It's funny how when you're kind of... This is gonna sound terrible. When you're kind of distracted by the word, like you're reading the word and it's the thing you're focusing on, things bubble up in your heart as you read it, and then you talk about it.

And it's been an amazing way to stay close to you. And I've never felt like it's been easier to initiate or receive intimacy than it has over the last... this particular reading through the Bible.

Selena: Right. And I think honestly it's a daily discipline and it's a duty as a believer. And that's okay to say those things and it's good. It shouldn't always be this experiential high of [00:10:00] oh God just spoke to me of all these things. God has a lot to say. And if He want to come to the table, He will absolutely reveal it to you.

But for so long, I think for me personally, I was chasing this emotional experience of reading and being in God's word. And yes, it is good and I walk away usually full and joyful, usually. But sometimes, you know, it's like, okay,

I'm reading through Chronicles and we're reading through all the names, God, what can you show me here that I may not see right now?

And He still is so good to just show me just the legacy I think of people. And you start seeing these names that you become familiar with, and you know the stories behind them, and then you're starting to see God's hand working through the lives of these people and the families. And the chronicling of them is so important for order and understanding. So anyways, again, a duty, a discipline, and it's there for our good and for His glory in us.

Ryan: How dare you say we should read our Bibles. You're such a legalist.

Selena: I know.

Ryan: When people will call you legalist or something like that, because they don't understand what legalism is- *[laughs]*

Selena: I mean, gosh.

Ryan: ...and what the Bible is.

Selena: And God is so good and faithful to just bring fruit in areas like intimacy that you might not connect with, oh, I'm reading through Chronicles. Yeah. Hey, let's jump in the sack. There's something being built there.

Ryan: So tinder. Okay, number one, being in God's Word together. Number two, communication. Okay, now, what is the low-hanging fruit, the easy-to-grab within arm's reach, stuff that I can do to stay close to my wife in terms of my communication? Well, to be honest, I can just think about and say things that are kind to her. I can encourage her.

Selena: You can say them in a kind way or a patient way or longsuffering way. "Selena, I know I said this to you 30 times, but I'm gonna say it one more time because I just need you to hear it and make sure..." *[chuckles]* Like there's ways that we can persevere with one another, that we can stay soft towards one another. And that will go a long way especially if you're in a bit of a drought or in a bit of a cold snap, a kind word can melt that.

Ryan: It is a clear example that is like literally an hour old is... I'm the chaplain for our local minor league baseball team. Technically, we're chaplains because you minister to the women. And I was looking at the calendar, I got an email and I was like, "Oh, the season starts up in April." And Selena is like, "What?" Because it's-

- Selena:** No. My response was, "Well, that was fun, wasn't it?" *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Like we're having time off.
- Selena:** Having time off, having the baby. And I was just... Yeah. And we're still in it. It's only February. But the way he said it to me, I was like, "Well, life's over." *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Oh, yeah.
- Selena:** And it's not that. I just told him, I was like, "I need more runway communication. When you talk to me and tell me, I need you to say, "Hey, this is on the horizon, or this is coming," not like, "Well, April is the first game." It's a little abrupt for me.
- Ryan:** If you're holding a rock in your hand, you can either set it on the ground, or you can drop it down or throw it. I had thrown the rock instead of setting it down.
- Selena:** And it cause a little riff but we learned.
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah.
- Selena:** My needs and his needs, and it's okay. And we can do this together but-
- Ryan:** It's one way to stay... As a husband, if I've got my head on a swivel, this morning I did not. If I'm not having my situational awareness about me, I can say, "Okay, this is how this might land for my wife. Let me tell her in a way that is going to inform her without causing her to panic."
- Selena:** I think that I didn't respond as off the cuff as I could have or usually do maybe. Maybe I'm taking too much pride in my response.
- Ryan:** Or you respond because you think it stresses me out. But I get stressed out because you get stressed out because you think it's stressing me out. And it's a vicious cycle. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** And ultimately, it does affect me because what affects him affects us and me. So I wasn't trying to be selfish. I think I was trying to really understand, you know, we do value this, we value this role and God has given it to us and we're so grateful. He's also given us a teammate too to help. Not Rainier's teammate, but someone else that another pastor.

- Ryan:** And we love that ministry and we're glad to be part of its volunteers. We love it. But the point is, is that there is there's a way to communicate that is life-bringing and keeps you connected. And there's a way to communicate that edges you away from one another.
- Selena:** Take those opportunities.
- Ryan:** This is very easy. This is tender, dry stuff, grab it, throw it on the fire, throw it on the place you're gonna start the fire so that when you do need to strike that match, it will be there to burn.
- Selena:** I love it.
- Ryan:** Number three here is actions and treatment of one another. In other words, serving one another. So simply doing things that maybe... You know, we do haven't in marriage are called to serve one another constantly. But there's a way that you can as a spouse go over and above. This is a simple example but we have these Sonicare toothbrushes, and we need to replace the heads.
- Selena:** Had for years and years.
- Ryan:** We need to replace the heads on those every so often when, you know... I don't do it as often as they tell you because I'm not an idiot. I know that's all about just trying to get more money from us. But I do do it periodically when it needs to happen. *[both laughs]* And I noticed that yours... I changed mine. So I'll change Selena's as well.
- Selena:** I thought you just put the clear lid on it. I was like, "Oh, he put the clean clear lid over my brush. That was nice.
- Ryan:** I didn't want to tell you and I wasn't going to tell you until we were going through this and I was like, "Did you know I did that little thing for you? I might get some credit for it." *[laughs]* I'm kidding. [00:15:00]
- Ryan:** You know, that might be maybe a little bit more solid wood than just the tinder, just a really quick burn-
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Maybe some kindling going on top of that.
- Selena:** Right. Right.

Ryan: Another one. This one is. So a while back we talked with Gary Thomas and Deborah Fileta about their book called *Married Sex*. And they brought up this concept of simmering. And to me that is along the lines of the fourth version of tender that we have here, which is your thoughts and internal dialogue toward one another.

So one of the things we ask couples to consider is to schedule time when they can be intimate because especially if you have a chaotic life, you have kids, it's just a full life, it's easy to be too tired to be intimate. But by scheduling time you have it in the calendar of your mind. We don't have it on a physical calendar, but you could theoretically. *[chuckles]*

Selena: We got it in our internet calendar. TikTok.

Ryan: But that allows you to anticipate and to think, okay, it's Thursday... There's somebody at church at the conference we went to, and he talked about... What did he call it? It was a certain... It was really funny. I think it's Thursday. It's Thursday.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: It could be like Tuesday and be like, "Hey, is it Thursday right now?" *[Selena chuckles]* But in your minds you know-

Selena: It's code.

Ryan: It's code. Yeah. So, you know to anticipate and to maybe shoot a text, say, "Hey, I'm looking forward to some time with you later. By the way you looked awesome this morning when I saw you."

Selena: And I think one of the things I want to say here that Deborah said, was that, you know, don't you get tired or doesn't it take care of the magic out and you know, at the end of the day, and you're tired, you don't want to have to do this with your spouse?

Because I think that's, again, some of the dialogue that we can allow into our hearts... And she said it so beautiful. And I probably won't do it justice. But she was just like, "No, at the end of the day, I want to fall into his arms. I want that connection, I want to be close to him. That is the beautiful closing of a great day.

Ryan: What a different orientation!

Selena: What a different orientation! I just was so, I think, encouraged and challenged by that dialogue, and how she thinks and talks about her husband. It's like, "Oh, yes, this is one of the safe places that God's given me. I want to be close to him and I want to enjoy. I want us to enjoy each other."

Ryan: So it goes from being an obligation and a duty to a blessing.

Selena: And a gift.

Ryan: And of course, there's a lot of dynamics at play.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: And hopefully your marriage would be in a place where you can feel that level of intimacy and trust.

Selena: I think you can chip away at that with a little thought and the little "Okay, I'm going to step out and make this effort a little bit more today." It goes a long way.

Ryan: Just to recap, these are the kinds of things that are within your immediate reach that you can use to begin to build that one match fire so that when you do have the match, and you've got the moment to light it, it actually ignites something.

The first one is being in God's Word together. The second one is communicating, generously speaking kindly to one another. The third one is your actions and how you're treating one another, going out of your way to serve in small ways.

And the fourth one is your thoughts and internal dialogue. You begin to kind of in your own mind imagine what lighting the match will be like when that time will come. And then from there, you move on to larger pieces of wood, whether that's, you know, is this picture of fire getting bigger and bigger. So you're gonna have to use your imagination in this. So what are the next things that you would put on top of the tinder we've just laid out?

Selena: So I guess taking that next step. You know, if you're talking about your communication, that next step might be having a discussion about your intimate life and taking that tangible step, like you said, of putting on the schedule and trusting that it's not going to take the magic away or the spontaneity away. Still be spontaneous but knowing that you have these times set aside for each other I think really is... it brings honor to your marriage and

to the marriage bed and it keeps you close, it keeps you warm, so to speak and it keeps...

Ryan: So you're saying moving from general communication, kind of let's be good spouses, let's just be nice to one another, let's communicate kindly. Moving from that into the intentional communication around what does our intimate life need to look like now in this moment, and what should we expect? What should I expect from you? What should you expect from me?

It's funny you talking about taking the magic out of it. Spontaneity is great, but there's something almost equally as-

Selena: It's not really real all the time.

Ryan: ...what's the word? I don't like many of the words that go around this conversation. There's something equally as steamy I'll say about almost being completely non-spontaneous. "Oh, can't wait till nine o'clock tonight. I'm going to do my dance for you." *[both laughs]* Whatever the thing is.

Selena: Having kids in the house, it's really hard to be spontaneous. I mean, you maybe can. You know your house. You know when you can kind of do that. It's just fun and it is like... It is like, Well, it's not Thursday. So do you want to... It's nine o'clock. You know? It's not like, "Hey, let's just go head up before I take the kids to school." [00:20:00]

Ryan: Let's just shove all this stuff off the kitchen counter, you know? Or you know, drive up to make out point. *[laughs]* Whatever the kids are doing these days. Kids should not be doing that. Let's just be honest. Let's be clear.

So discuss your intimate life together. And that can be tangible. Like you said, scheduling sex, also texting one another.

Selena: The whole idea of simmering, I think too.

Ryan: Check that out. By the way, we do have on our website... If you go to shop.fiercemarriage.com, we have online courses there. And one of them is Married Sex. And we do talk with Deborah Fileta and Gary Thomas, and they get into a lot of this in detail. That's available for you, if you want to check that out. It's a mini course. We highly encourage you to do that. Just to go deeper on that topic.

Selena: I don't know, if there's one more larger block of wood we want to talk about with one another... I mean, I just think scheduling across the board. So scheduling to be in God's Word together, scheduling to communicate I think

transparently, and have time and breath for those deeper discussions. Discussing, you know, how you're treating one another, how each other's feeling about how you're treating one another, and your heart orientation towards that. You know, try scheduling time for that, scheduling time to do those actions, and scheduling time about your thought life and what is that entailing.

Ryan: And to carry the analogy to its fruition, when I'm picturing tinder, that's the easy stuff. And then it gets the kindling. And then you have the actual logs of wood. Those are the things that are the hardest to get burning. So to me, that would be the actual endeavor itself. When you've lit the fire, you've let the heat build, it's been ready to-

Selena: Schedule the things, but now you're actually doing the thing.

Ryan: So now we're actually together. As someone might say, the logs are burning, okay? *[laughs]* I don't know how to say it. And we are the logs and we are on fire. And I think that's where the analogy goes. Feel free to leave a comment if I've missed something obvious in the analogy. But I think the whole point is just setting the stage-

Selena: The log to burn.

Ryan: ...to make it an ideal scenario where you can get the logs.

Selena: Good.

Ryan: Selena, you are beautiful, beautiful log. My beautiful brown log. *[laughs]*

Selena: Okay. So we are going to talk ultimately-

Ryan: Scripture last.

Selena: I know. We probably should have come out of the gate with this. But we kind of wanted to just have the discussion so that you're already thinking about ways of how to do this. But also, you know, quickly we have... This is ultimately a talk about how can we love one another better, right, as spouses. The Bible does give, you know, some direction and instruction on husbands and wives.

Ryan: Just a little bit.

Selena: But also being that this is kind of a conversation about love, which ironically, we're recording this on Valentine's Day- *[chuckles]*

- Ryan:** Which we did nothing for as a marriage ministry. Sorry.
- Selena:** Yeah. We did not mean to. But hey, you should be loving each other all the time.
- Ryan:** We do have a blog post that talks about the history of St. Valentine's Day. It's riveting. It's riveting. Check it out on our website.
- Selena:** So a couple of verses. 1 Corinthians has a few obviously that we'll get to. But the first one I wanted to talk about was John 15:12-13. Jesus says, "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone laid down his life for his friends."
- So once again, we have love being set aside, being set up as the greatest of these. This is his commandment. The first commandment is to love the Lord your God. So again, loving God-
- Ryan:** Ooh, that's loaded.
- Selena:** Because when you can love God as He has loved you, which He loves us first, right, in 1 John 4:19 is we love because he loved us first, he first loved us. And so we can only love in a way that is selfless, that is full of grace and full of-
[chuckles]
- Ryan:** That is something that is a reinterpretation of His love toward us.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** But here's why this passage is tricky to me, because this is like the bludgeon passage that's always used when you talk about like, you know, cultural issues. Like, hey, it's not okay for gay people to get married, right? And some of them will say, well, like, you aren't being loving by saying that.
- I don't mean to go down that rabbit trail, but I'm saying there is a definition of love that we need here. Because is it loving to let someone continue in sin that's outlined as sin? The behavior that's outlined in sin. We're in the Bible lesson, excuse me. Is that loving? "Greater love has no man in this no one than this that they laid on their life for his friends."
- Okay, so we need to know what God means by love, what Jesus meant when he said, Love. And so for that we go to God's word. Again, the 1 Corinthians 13, This is what love is. Again, take all this and think now through how this might apply to the one-match fire.

The way of love is this, "If I speak in tongues of men and of angels, but I have not love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and knowledge, if I have all faith so as to move mountains but have not love, I am nothing. [00:25:00] If I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but I have not love, I gain nothing.

Selena: So it's interesting, I'm sorry, just what he's talking about. You probably might read the whole chapter. It's like 15 verses or something. So it's not terribly long. It's like kind of displays. So he's talking with men and angels. It's a display of crossing over into the unseeable, you know, the spiritual realm.

But if I don't have love towards my neighbor, then I'm just making noise. If I have prophetic powers and I can understand things and I am knowledgeable but I don't love, then I am nothing. If I have faith to do these big displays of moving mountains and-

Ryan: Well, the context is that he's talking to the church and they are doing church things in a manner unbecoming of a bride of Christ. And he's saying you're doing all the things that the church should do, but you're doing it in a way that is not becoming.

Selena: Without loaf. *[Ryan laughs]* Without love, sorry. Loaf. What did you say?

Ryan: They also probably broke bread at some point and there were loaves involved. *[both laughs]* We love the loaf. *[Selena chuckles]* So he set them straight in a way we can set our own hearts straight. It's like I did dishes. What's the big deal? Like, come on.

Selena: I take the garbage out.

Ryan: ...it's time for us to be close. I did what you wanted, now, give me the goods. That's not loving.

Selena: That's manipulative.

Ryan: That's tit for tat. We're not fans of that. That rhymes. There you go. And then Paul goes on. Love is patient, kind, does not envy or boast, is not arrogant or rude, does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing. That's the part of love that I want to emphasize here.

We talked about the misinterpretation of love and our culture is that that version of Love says he should rejoice in wrongdoing. We're saying, no, love does not rejoice in wrongdoing and it rejoices with the truth. We're not going

to tell you a lie that what you're doing is good and blessed by God. That's not just the one issue I mentioned, but could be any number of cultural issues.

Cohabiting is a big one of those. Sleeping around before marriage of all manner of, you know, drunkenness, pornography addiction, all those things. I will not rejoice in those things with you because I love you. I will rejoice in the truth. And the truth is you repent and believe in the gospel.

And he goes on. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Love is strong, people. Love is strong enough, if we will submit ourselves to love Himself, and that is the God of the Bible and what He has said to us about love.

Selena: I mean, it ends with, you know, so now faith, hope, and love by these three but the greatest of these is love. Again, love is elevated out of these. And I think we need to undertake that and understand that love is important. The way we do things and with the heart that we do think it matters to God.

Ryan: And I think the reason is because love is the natural outworking of true faith and true hope. And it's the kind of love that the Bible gives us. It's not good feelings love. It's the love that says, if you really believe these things, your hope is truly in Christ, then your love will show it. And if your love is not showing that, then where's the faith and where's the hope? It must be elsewhere.

Selena: And love is clearly not a feeling. right? It's called the way of love. That's the title of the chapter. 1 Corinthians 16:14. I'm going to back up to one more verse before it. It says, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." So this is final instructions to the Corinthians." And then he goes to 1 Corinthians.

We did talk about this first before when you were talking about being men. But even, you know, he's giving men these instructions of being watchful, stand firm in the faith. Act like men. Be strong. And all of these things that you do, they have to be done in love. Otherwise, they're just things that are done without... It's just a checklist. And it doesn't set us apart. I mean, non-believers can do these things.

Ryan: Let all that you do be done as an outworking of the faith and hope you have in Christ.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Therefore, let it be done in love. And so if we are doing things as an outworking of our own personal worldview, and it's not necessarily rooted in our faith and hope in Christ, then there's a good chance we're not doing that thing in love. We're rooting in something else.

Again, we must always use this as our plumb line, our calibration. Smart. Calibration. The point is the word of God. That's what I'm trying to do here. And that's what we're doing with this idea of love with respect to what it means to create a one-match fire. Hopefully full circle there.

So the conversation challenge. As you've listened to this episode, go home and just consider with your spouse, choose one area, communication, actions, or thoughts, and discuss with them how you can keep that one match fire ready to be lit.

And don't start with here's what you can do for me. *[both laughs]* But instead ask your spouse, how can I speak to you more kindly? Like mind-blowing moment for every husband. Go to your wife and say, "How have I loved you well and how can I love you better? [00:30:00]"

Selena: It's music to your ears I think as just a spouse of saying, Oh, and all of your... I mean, ideally, anything that you're holding up against them would crumble and you would be like, Oh, gosh, this is what I... it's just melting. It's heat. And it's melting away kind of the coldness of sin, the frustrations, the shortcomings.

Ryan: Am I wrong and thinking that it's disarming for a wife? Like this scenario: husband comes home, "Okay, I realize we've not been connecting well, whatever the issue is, I love you, and I want to experience a healthy, intimate life with you. But I realize that I've failed at times. How can I love you better? How have you felt loved in the past? Please just tell me. I want to be close to you. I want to love you in every way, including our intimate life. But I realized that it's not just that, there's more to it." Is that disarming to a wife?

Selena: I would say so.

Ryan: I would hope so. The wife could say the same to her husband as well. The point is the orientation is I have not acted in perfect faith and hope in Christ in how I've loved you. Helped me do that better.

Selena: Beginning with repentance and being humble because it can sound manipulative if the humility isn't there, right?

Ryan: Yeah. Well, the gospel is humbling. And that's why we always end with it is because it is from that place of knowing who Christ is and knowing who God is that we finally begin to understand our need and our depth of need and our depth of depravity really in light of who is... I heard a theologian say this. We can look at the ground all we want, we can think our vision is great. But then we look up to the sun and realize just how poor our eyes are at staring at the sun. They can't do it. We can't behold His glory.

Selena: Yeah, we cannot.

Ryan: It's too bright for us. So if we never look at God Himself, we look at our own lives, we think, "We're doing pretty good." I look at my neighbor, "I'm bad, but I'm not that bad." Now when we turn our eyes up, and we look to the person and work of God in Christ, the love of God, the righteousness of God, the holiness, justice, we're blinded.

Selena: And our goodness is just dirty rags.

Ryan: We realize that we cannot withstand His glory as we are. We need a redeemer because we've sinned against Him. And so that Redeemer, of course, is Christ.

If you want to learn more about who Jesus is and what that means to follow Him, to become a Christian, to put your faith in Him, we would love nothing more than for folks watching this, hearing this to do that. And the way you can start that journey is to go to thenewsisgood.com. It just gives you a little gospel primer. We have Paul Washer on there. We have some other tips and how to maybe... I guess not tips. Doctrines. *[laughs]* Not the same thing. And then you can go down that path, find a church, find somebody to walk alongside you.

Let's pray. God, thank you for the gift it is to be married, the gift it is to share intimacy with my spouse. With the couple's listening to this, watching this, I pray they would be hold the gift it is to be married. I pray that even in their hardship that they would see the goodness of it.

If they're struggling in their marriage, if their husband's not responsive, if the wife is not responsive, if they're on the brink of divorce, Lord, I pray that you would work a miracle. And I pray that that miracle starts with beholding you the true God of the Bible, the true God our Savior, who's loved us so much in such a way that we could know you. And you've asked us to love each other in a similar way.

Lord, I pray that you bring those couples closer together. I pray that you'd help them flourish even if it starts with a tiny little fire. So eventually they can get

to a place of consistent warmth and health in their marriage. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Thanks for sticking around. This has been fun.

Selena: If you keep seeing me look down, it's because our little ones just right down there. So when she's squirming around, I'm like, "Uuuh, what's happening?"
[chuckles]

Ryan: We don't do this often but next week, we're going to talk about, should we combine our bank accounts. We had a good question come in-

Selena: My money is not going in your money account. It's my money.

Ryan: I always spend her money on things that I don't really want. *[Selena chuckles]* She wants them. Anyway, should you join your bank accounts? Should they be merged? Should they be shared? We're talking about that until next week. If you have a question, you can go to fiercemarriage.com/ask and you can ask question there. That's where we get a lot of this topic ideas. Other than that, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - John 15:12-13
 - 1 John 4:19
 - 1 Corinthians 16:14
 - John 15:12-13

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

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