

THE THING NO ONE TALKS ABOUT

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-thing-no-one-talks-about>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome once again to the Fierce Marriage Podcast. Selena is with a guest today. *[Selena laughs]* You might hear her if you're listening in. Sunny's with us, as it will be the norm for the foreseeable future because you know what... Thank you little one. Your commentary is not needed right now. *[both laughs]* This is a Fierce Marriage Podcast. And you know what? This marriage has had another baby.

Selena: It's what happens in marriage. It's what happens when you get married. We make babies.

Ryan: Yes. And this beautiful little baby is growing rapidly. So she needs to be held a lot and she always needs to feed. Although she's much cuter than Gollum or whatever the spider's name is on *Lord of the Rings*. *[both laughs]*

Anyway, today we were... you know, interesting episode. I think this topic is... You know, as a marriage podcast or marriage writer, this is not the sort of topic that you drum up for clickbait. Because I mean, to be honest, y'all are bit voracious—Is that the right word?—for when we talk about sex. And we don't also here talk about sex. And I get it.

Selena: We've talked a lot about sex. *[laughs]* All right?

Ryan: It's an exciting topic.

Selena: Is it?

Ryan: Big fan. Big fan of the sex. God did a good thing.

Selena: Good sex.

Ryan: God did a good thing. The sex is-

Selena: I've had it at least four times. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Four times you can prove. Just saying. Allegedly more.

Selena: Anyways.

Ryan: Today, we're talking about service as an act of pursuit. So again, sex on one hand, service on the other. So service is not sexy necessarily. [Selena laughing] Not servicing... Selena. *[laughs]* This is an adult podcast. Now it's not gonna be an adult podcast. We're talking about service today.

Anyway, I'm gonna let Selena calm down and I'll see you on the other side.
[Selena laughs]

[00:01:55] <music>

Selena: How dare you? How dare you?

Ryan: How dare I? How dare I?

Selena: How dare you? You're the one that brought up this sex topic. So...

Ryan: No, I'm trying to contrast it. But I will tell you, if you can-

Selena: With service. But don't try to serve to get what you want. Okay?

Ryan: What?

Selena: That's called manipulation. *[Ryan laughs]* It's a manipulation tactic.

Ryan: Yes, it's true. It's true. And we'll talk about that later. So thanks for jumping the gun on that one. *[Selena chuckles]* Now if you don't know who we are, welcome. I'm sorry for the first impression you got of us.

Selena: I'm not.

Ryan: Yeah, I guess I'm not sorry. *[laughs]* Yeah, you tell them. You tell those listeners and viewers.

Selena: This is Sunny.

Ryan: This is Sunny. She is the fourth daughter of ours. We are the Fredericks. I'm Ryan. This is Selena, my beautiful, lovely bride, the wife of my youth. I'm thankful to be able to do ministry with her.

Selena: So yeah, we spend our days writing books, creating content specifically for couples, and pointing you to Christ because we want to see a generation of families who are built for the glory of Christ. And we can't wait to see in 30 years kinds of babies our babies are raising. It'll be amazing. And I'm praying

that they are going to be little ones who love and know the Lord because of the seeds that are being sown here today.

Selena: He can rhyme.

Ryan: I didn't realize I rhymed.

Selena: You did. The babies, the raising, and amazing.

Ryan: Okay. I also moonlight as a rapper *[both laughs]* A lot of rap battles, you know. Anyway-

Selena: [inaudible 00:03:29]

Ryan: Yeah, later, in the afterhours podcast for Patreon members only. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Anyways.

Ryan: So we're talking about service. We're having a lot of fun because I feel like this topic gets a bad rap. But honestly our Savior, our King taught us to serve.

Selena: He modeled it. Just Him being here on Earth was an act of service.

Ryan: He was the servant King. And He tells husbands to surf through sacrifice, to love sacrificially like Christ did. He tells wives to serve through submission. Service is so interlaced with our faith. And yet it's something that we can kind of just over-spiritualize. And here we want to talk about it in spiritual terms. We want to bring it down into the marital reality that it might serve you well to be a servant. Man, I'm just-

Selena: Well, and I think it's one distinction of the Christian life, right? I mean, there are other religions that service is more of an act of... what?

Ryan: Let be honest, it's an act of self-actualization.

Selena: Yeah, it's all about yourself. It's not-

Ryan: There's benevolence for benevolence's sake because it basically, you know, we want to feel... But what's the ultimate game of benevolence? Well, it has to terminate somewhere. And we believe it terminates in being faithful to God for the glory of God, that someone might be brought to into a saving knowledge of Christ.

Selena: And it's an obedience.

Ryan: Not just I'm going to give you food and say, Have a good day. I'm gonna give you food and say, "Do you know who Christ is?"

Selena: Right. There you go.

Ryan: That's, I think, [00:05:00] the Christian model for service. So we do everything with a context. So speaking of context, let's read from John chapter 13 starting in verse 12.

"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.'"

So this is, of course, at the Last Supper and Jesus is headed to Golgotha. He is headed to be crucified, and He is giving them this example of service.

So I just want to quickly glean three things from this, three kinds of lessons that I think we can faithfully draw out of the Scripture or we can read from the scriptures, and then I want to take a step back and ask some questions on how we can apply these into specifically our marriages.

So the first lesson is this. Actually, as an overall kind of note here, it's astounding what Jesus is doing. So He is the King of kings, Lord of lords and here He is showing up as the guest of honor, I mean, for these men. And yet, He's modeling for them something that is completely counterintuitive. Even they at this moment, they wouldn't have assumed, Oh, yeah, Jesus is gonna wash our feet.

Selena: Right. It would not have been His... You would not assume Him to fulfill that role.

Ryan: Right. Right. And yet He surprised them. So when He does that, they're kind of taken aback. And here's the first truth or the first maybe lesson we can learn from this, is that Jesus was foreshadowing His ultimate act of servanthood through death on the cross.

Again, foreshadowing is kind of one of these maybe catch-all terms we can use that say, Oh, yeah, it's kind of points to some dim... it's a dim reflection of what's going to happen and what's to come. But I think in this case, it's particularly potent because He is taking on a servant's role, He is doing the

thing that no one else wanted to do, and He's modeling it for them. Because after He goes to the cross, we are then called to die to ourselves, to die to our flesh, to live under Christ.

Paul says to live is Christ and to die is gain. So He's modeling this level of service so that I think later on He'll also model a new level of service in His death.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: And there's some nuance to be had. This actually by the way, it comes out of our book... or it's a book I wrote for husbands called *Husband in Pursuit*. This is chapter 13. There's some actual pursuit... Check it out. Go to 31daypursuit.com. There's actually a pair of these books.

But they give you tangible ways to pursue your spouse over 31 days. And if you do it together, it can make for a really fun, sexy time for both of you. It's not all about that. There's definitely some of that in there. But it's really just about pursuing one another, and with actions you can do.

So I kind of want to read this part. Do you want to say something?

Selena: Well, I just want to, I think, draw attention to the fact that when Christ is... I mean, His whole life was an act of service, you know, unto the Father and for us to save our souls and to cover us with His blood. I mean, He did it for Himself, but not in a selfish way. Right? Is that accurate to say?

We're not just serving to serve because we've been called and told to serve. Jesus came because He loved us. It came out of... Do you know what I mean? Like it's act of true service.

Ryan: I wrestled this a lot. This is gonna sound really dorky but I wrestled with this a lot. The Kantian view of selflessness versus the Aristotelian view of selflessness.

Selena: Go ahead and explain that for those of us that forget those terms.

Ryan: No, no. Again, I said that it's gonna sound dorky. Here we are.

Selena: See, she doesn't like it.

Ryan: I upset my daughter. I'm very sorry. What I meant by that, and this is why I prefaced it is because it sounds dorky, because one of them is like basically the root of ethics is like a pure motive, whereas the other it's like the outcome determines whether it's good or bad. Right?

- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** So to me, a Christian ethic is neither dependent on outcome or dependent necessarily on motive. I would say it's dependent on obedience and it's dependent on worship. So I think there's a Christian way that is distinct, where we're called to serve as an act of worship and obedience unto God.
- Selena:** Right. I mean, you're saying submission and self-sacrifice is a way of service.
- Ryan:** But the motive behind it, I think, is rooted in the desire to obey God. So I serve you because I love you, yes, [00:10:00] and I get something from that. But ultimately, if I don't want to serve you, I have to decide, am I going to rebel against God right now or I'm going to obey God? And I need to obey. Thankfully, more often than not, I like to serve you.
- Selena:** I like when you serve me.
- Ryan:** I also like when you asked me to do things and don't imply that I should do them. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Never.
- Ryan:** "Hey, the garbage is empty." "Oh, that's nice to know." *[Selena laughs]* I wonder who's going to empty that later." *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** 20 years, friends. Almost 20 years and I'm still learning how to talk good to him.
- Ryan:** And I'm still learning how not to be a belligerent husband. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** I wouldn't say belligerent, I'd say oblivious. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** Just kidding. No.
- Ryan:** Definitely I'm not oblivious. *[both laughs]* All right, so the first kind of lesson is Jesus is foreshadowing kind of His ultimate act of service. So in a sense, our service is reflecting that ultimate act.
- The second lesson. I'm gonna keep going because you're doing the baby thing.
- Selena:** I'm sorry.

Ryan: It's okay. The second lesson is that Jesus was countering the proud attitudes of the disciples. So I'm just gonna read from this chapter. It's in Luke's parallel account. Do you mind kid? In Luke's parallel account, the disciples were caught fighting over who would be regarded as the greatest. That's in Luke 22:24.

"Jesus's example of humility and servanthood would have shocked them. How could He, their teacher, stoop to such a level? Jesus used His own example to remind them that the quote 'leader is one who serves.'" That's from verse 26. "In God's economy, the greatest are the least, the richest are the poorest, and the least shall be first. He was discrediting the proud attitudes and refocusing them on what matters.

So He was countering the proud attitude. So am I proud in my attitude toward my wife? Am I being proud and not taking the inference that the garbage needs to go out? I'm just saying, I hear you. I'm picking up what you're putting down. *[laughs]* I do that sometimes.

Selena: I mean, so can you be proud and actually serve? Is that the question? Right?

Ryan: Wow. Yeah, probably not.

Selena: Right. You're manipulating at that point.

Ryan: Sure. Maybe.

Selena: Maybe. If you're proud, you can go through the actions. But again, like you said, it's got to be a heart desired. It has to reflect that you love God and that you want to be obedient to Him versus the desire to go-

Ryan: So I'm like, "I took the garbage out. Are you happy?" *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: That's right.

Ryan: Look at all these good things I did for you. Again, that comes back to my motives are clearly self-serving and maybe in pride. There's a way to nuance the pride even more than that. I think in general it'd be hard to serve and be prideful at the same time.

Selena: Yeah, obviously, He was sinless. I just think He models it, obviously, to perfection of serving and being patient and longsuffering. I don't know. His level of service is, of course, off the charts. I mean, dying for us is... I keep coming back to that because it just speaks so loudly.

Ryan: So the second one was that Jesus was countering the proud attitudes of the disciples. And I think His model of service can also counter our proud attitudes.

Third, the last one we'll cover today is that Jesus reminded His disciples to follow His example by serving one another. So Jesus is saying, "Listen, this act of service is what... I'm foreshadowing, the ultimate act of service. And in that sense, when you serve one another, you will be reflecting that because it will be after the fact.

Second, you can't serve and also be proud. And the third one is, how you do this is you serve one another. Serve one another.

I'll read this next part as well. "As I sat down to eat, there was there were no servants in sight, who could wash their feet. Yet it didn't occur to any of them to step in and serve their brothers in that way. As I mentioned, washing feet wasn't a formality or a nicety. It was a required prerequisite to a sanitary meal.

To refuse to wash each other's feet would have been to say, 'I'd rather not eat than do that.' There's a good chance the notion of washing the other's feet occurred to one of them. But as we can see, no one acted on it. Jesus's example is a potent reminder that we're called to get our hands dirty by serving others, and we shouldn't allow pride or forgetfulness to get in the way." And so I go on to say, I'm sure you start to see the parallels here.

So what are the parallels? We are called clearly to serve not just kind of out in the ether. We are called to serve each other.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And again, we're talking in marriage context. You could say we serve our brothers, we serve fellow humans, we serve our sisters in Christ, we serve in all these different capacities. But this isn't just an ethereal serving service. There is a very tangible aspect: getting your hands dirty, doing the hard thing, and doing it in light of who Christ is.

Selena: Right. I mean, like you said, it's not something that's out there that sounds ideal. [00:15:00] That you know, maybe I'll post this thing and it will serve others. It's as great if you want to post that kind of stuff. But if you're not serving at home and your family is not feeling served, your husband is not feeling loved and served and you are not loving and serving the Lord yourself, I would question kind of the words that would be flowing out onto a post. That sounds so silly. But I'm just saying you need to... It starts here with you first.

Ryan: I agree with that. I want to get us thinking in these terms because sometimes we can think of service too cerebrally in our own in our heads. So to help with that, I have this reflection question. Again, this comes from our book, *Husband in Pursuit*. There's a *Wife in Pursuit* as well. I'm reading it right now. This is a reflection question.

"Think of one time in the past when you've been served radically and unexpectedly. How did that make you feel? What effect did it have on your heart, your attitude, and appreciation? Can you think of any instance of being served?"

Selena: Radically?

Ryan: Yeah. I mean, there's a thousand of them where I've served you in that way. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: With you or just in general?

Ryan: Just in general. I'm not trying to put you on the spot.

Selena: No, I think anytime we've had a baby, we've been served, especially... You know, even this last time is just so recent and fresh in my head is we've been served meals, we've been served by people taking care of our other kids and taking them out for fun things to do.

I mean, I feel like your attitude in how you serve me when I feel like I'm kind of spiraling and not able to keep up with things, when you can come in and sweep in and be calm and say, What can I do? How can I help you? Like having those phrases just ready to go, that is what truly is dynamite to me about you. And I'm like, "He's really serving and loving me." You're happy about it. You're gracious to do it.

Ryan: I do love to do it because I know that the need is clear. And frankly, part of that is coming from the fact that I see your body literally been broken to bring forth new life for our family. Not just broken in a moment, but broken over 10 months slowly *[laughs]* until you correct like an Easter egg. *[laughs]*

Selena: Okay. Wow.

Ryan: That went downhill real fast. *[both laughs]* So the feeling's mutual is I'm trying to say. One instance that came to mind is our friends down in Georgia... We get the opportunity to go to Marriage Collective once in a while. It's kind of a thing where people like us get together and put our heads together and think and talk and encourage and rest-

- Selena:** And eat and get fed. Yeah.
- Ryan:** And it's hosted by the folks at Chick-fil-A. It's part of their ministry. They have a marriage... It's hard to explain. They're very, very gracious is what I'm getting at. Do you not feel incredibly served at those events?
- Selena:** Yes. Yes.
- Ryan:** It's not that it's over the top. It's just, you know, everything is thought through. Like every i is dotted, every T is crossed.
- Selena:** You might have to stop for a minute.
- Ryan:** All right, we're back. Oh, I did it.
- Selena:** Daddy's got the touch.
- Ryan:** What I was saying is that Chick-fil-A stuff is when we go and... Even if you've been to the restaurants, it feels like this is just their attitude.
- Selena:** They say 'my pleasure' after everything.
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. Our friends have a way of serving us in that way as well. Anyway, anytime we've been served in that way, it's always felt incredible and it feels like you feel loved in a really unique undisputable way.
- Selena:** Absolutely. I feel like even serving others, you get filled, and then by being served, you get filled. So either way, you're being filled up to be poured out once again for God's glory and for the building of unity and intimacy with your spouse. Again, it is not like, Hey, I'm gonna pour into you so I can get what I want later. That's not what it is at all.
- Ryan:** Yeah, it's not manipulation.
- Selena:** It's sacrificial. It's "I don't always feel like doing or responding like this but I know that when I do, it's an act of love, it's an act of service, it's an act of-
- Ryan:** Mm, it's good.
- Selena:** ...yeah, caring for you on a day to day. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** So the challenge is here. If you're listening to this podcast episode and you felt this kind of like, yeah, I want to dive in and try to serve my spouse in some

way, I was gonna say this. What are three ways that you can serve your husband, serve your wife proactively?

Selena: I wouldn't even-

Ryan: And it's gonna be contextual. Like for me, and Selena you mentioned this already, but one of the clearest ways that I can serve you just by asking, "How can I help? What can I do? Can I make dinner tonight?"

Selena: Always that. Always that. I'm just like, "Yes."

Ryan: Can I take the kids? Whatever that thing is. I'll go into a situation, I'll sense, okay, there is a little bit of a...

Selena: Situational awareness here.

Ryan: ..situation going on here and I'm aware of it. *[both laughs]* And I'm gonna say, Okay, where's the wildcard here and how can I get that wildcard out of the situation? [00:20:00] Whether it's dinner or the one kid that's, you know, being extra needy and naggy or you know... What can I do to help defuse this bomb?

Selena: And it's not usually a big thing. Usually, you don't have to say, Hey..." I mean, you can say, hey, let's find a sitter and go out on a date. But usually when you just come in and identify what's happening and how you can respond, or how you can ask, I mean, that's dynamite to me. Like I said, it's just... I don't know, I keep going back. I feel like I'm going like this in my conversation. I'm sorry.

Ryan: We got a baby in the mix. So what are three ways? I would encourage you to think through that. How can you serve me? How would you serve me? *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: I know you're trying to ask. How would-

Ryan: How would you love to serve me? *[both laughs]* Come on.

Selena: Not, how would you like me to serve you?

Ryan: I'd really like for you to love to serve me in some way. *[both chuckles]* You're asking me this. I was asking how can you serve your spouse?

Selena: How could a wife serve her husband?

Ryan: You. I mean, yeah, sure, wife.

Selena: What are you asking?

Ryan: I'm asking you. *[both laughs]*

Selena: How can I serve you well?

Ryan: So my idea to serve you well is to ask you, what can I do? What's your idea to serve me? *[both laughs]*

Selena: I don't know. It's hard because sometimes I think I project how I would want to be served. But you know, we make dinner for you, we do these things. But the real things I think that really get to your heart are just those deep and annoying things of like, "Hey, your attitude..." I'm kidding. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Annoying?

Selena: No. It's because you're like, You know, I feel like you're on edge and you're not... Like you want me to do with a happy heart and you want me to be happy and joyful down to my core. And I'm like, Can I just be happy on my face right now? Because my core is really frustrated right now? *[laughs]* You want this through and through, the true and you want-

Ryan: I have felt so loved when I know that you're responding consciously with a happy heart.

Selena: Yeah. Sometimes I'm like, I can respond here but this is hard.

Ryan: Here in your face, but not in your heart?

Selena: Here in my face and not in my heart.

Ryan: Got you.

Selena: Sometimes I'm like, "Can I serve you a different way?" Because it's hard. But again, service is not always meant to be easy, right? You are supposed to get down into the nitty gritty of washing those feet. What is a way that I can serve you that maybe I'm not aware or I'm not always situationally aware when I've got four kids that are like-

Ryan: Gosh, you serve me in thousand ways. So-

Selena: There's no need to improve them.

Ryan: Honestly to just like... You know how in the mornings when you come down, I can tell like in a millisecond, it's gonna be a good morning or... How was the night rather? That was better. *[both laughs]* And when you come down, and I get the sense that you're happy to be alive and happy to see your husband.

Selena: Usually, if you make me coffee, I'm always happy to be alive. *[chuckles]* No, I'm kidding. Just a hint for you. But-

Ryan: Again, back to serving you. *[both laughs]* Here we are.

Selena: I'm trying to be clear. How do you want to be served?

Ryan: "I can serve you by you serving me." *[both laughs]* That's what you're saying.

Selena: Hey, it's... What do you call that?

Ryan: It's circular service is what that is.

Selena: And it's about time to talk about Jesus.

Ryan: Yeah. See how I baby-whisper to this baby.

Selena: It only took till our fourth kid for him to be able to do this.

Ryan: How dare you? *[Selena laughs]* You weren't just-

Selena: It's been rare for him today. Anyways.

Ryan: You know what? You're gonna be canceled after this. It's going to be the Ryan Show, *[both laughs]* and no one will listen. No, seriously, if you don't know Jesus is we're talking about service. If you heard the story of Jesus washing their feet, that's the Savior we know. He is a King, but He is the servant King. And He is our Lord but He is our loving Lord. He is a shepherd but He is the good Shepherd. He's not run-of-the-mill. He is unlike anyone else and He is our Savior. His name is Jesus.

If you don't know Him, if you haven't placed your faith in Him, if you don't even know what that means, we have a website for you. It's thenewsisgood.com. It lays out basic Christian belief and a few steps you can take toward getting to know and following Jesus and placing your faith in Him. So we hope that you do that.

Let's pray. Jesus, thank you for loving us so well. You humbled yourself even to death on a cross that we might know you, that might be saved in you, that

you might cast our sin as far as the east is from the west, that our transgressions are no longer held against us. You have worn them on the cross and you have bore the consequence of our sin, all as the good servant leader.

Also Christ you are our war captain. You are our King. You are our triumphant Savior. God, we trust that someday that death will not retain its sting and tear to be wiped away all [00:25:00] because of your goodness, Lord. And for those reasons, our hope is in You. We serve because our hope is in You. We serve because there's no greater call than to love and obey You. So, Jesus, I pray that you'd help us to do that, help us serve one another in light of Your service toward us and in light of Your goodness and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, if you're a partner with us—we haven't somehow lost you at this point—go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. We would love that. You know what? We got mouths to feed. All right. If you're not looking at the screen and you're on the podcast, you can't see the little mouth I have to feed. The partnering is part of the way we do that. Just saying. *[both laughs]* I don't have dad arm. My bicep is on fire. *[Selena laughs]* You better end this episode. *[laughs]*

All right, 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**
 - John chapter 13:12-16
 - Luke 22:24

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com
 - [Husband in Pursuit](#)
 - [Wife in Pursuit](#)

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