

### 3 LIES THAT KEEP COUPLES DIVIDED

<https://fiercemarriage.com/3-lies-that-keep-couples-divided>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** Proverbs 4:23 instructs believers to keep our hearts with all diligence. Meaning that there are aspects of our hearts that are prone to drift from truth-

**Selena:** Oh, yeah.

**Ryan:** ...are prone to going off the rails.

**Selena:** Guard your hearts.

**Ryan:** Now to somebody with a robust, I'll use this term, theology of man, we know that we are sinners, that we have this sin nature, that until the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, the sin nature is governing our hearts. So if your foundational belief, listening to this or headed into marriage, is that humans are basically good, then that's not a biblical belief.

Humans are basically fallen. And yes, we can do good things. That's by the grace of God. We can do good. We can be nice. We can be kind. We can say true things. But when it comes to our position in terms of our holiness, in terms of standing before God, we are not, by default, headed toward truth. We are, by default, heading away from it.

And how does that work itself out in marriage? That's what we discussed today. That there are these subtle lies that if we do not keep our hearts with all diligence, as the writer of Proverbs tells us, Solomon, then we are prone to believing these three. And I think they're subtle lies, but they're huge. So they're subtle, but they work in big ways.

**Selena:** Yeah, I think we can believe them... we can live unaware of believing them, they kind of creep in, but we can also be living outright in them and being like, "What do I do with this struggle that I'm having with this lie? What is the truth? And how can I not live in this lie anymore?"

**Ryan:** So hopefully through this episode you will be encouraged to kind of look introspectively, are you believing any one of these lies? Maybe you're believing more than one of these lies. And if so, what are we to do and how are we to walk in the light? So thank you for joining us. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:02:07] <music>

**Ryan:** Greetings and welcome. My name is Ryan and this is my lovely wife, Selena. We are the Fredericks.

**Selena:** And this is Sunny.

**Ryan:** Yes, Sunny is with us from the get-go.

**Selena:** She's with us. *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** She had an awesome nap right up until we hit record *[both laughs]* and now she's wide awake.

**Selena:** We're almost to that time where she's going to probably have to go hang with someone else while we record. But right now, she's still hanging with us.

**Ryan:** So if you're not familiar with us or this channel or this podcast, this is what we do. We spend our lives helping couples live out their marriage, live out the parenting roles that God has given us unto the glory of Christ so that we might be found faithful and we might be fruitful in this life. So thank you for giving us your time, your attention. We will strive to use it well to edify those who would stick with us.

By the way, this comes from a book that we wrote and actually released in 2020. This is our book called See-Through Marriage. Looks like that. That's a mosaic. That's supposed to be stained glass, see-through. There it is. But the whole theme of that book is living in light of who Christ is and what He's done. And it's based on this idea that John the Baptist brought to the fore in John 1. He said, "I am not the light, but I am here to be the one through whom the light shines. The light is shining through me."

So the idea of being see-through is that when we are transparent, it's like Paul talked about being the vessels that are broken and *[inaudible 00:03:43]* broken, the glory of Christ kind of spills out and it's unto the glory of God. But when we see-through, you know, we tend to light because we have personality, we have our own kind of life circumstance, we're uneven kind of shards of glass. But the more transparent we are, the more light is seen the more beautiful this mosaic of marriage becomes.

So that's what the theme of the book was. But we thought it might be appropriate to go through this one chap... It's a part of a chapter. It's chapter three and it's all about the lies of isolation.

**Selena:** Right. And I think it's good to talk about lies in marriage and the lies that we're believing because there is a lot of information out there. I think it's good to

have in your arsenal, well, how do we sort through the lies? How do we find the truth? How do we know the truth? How do we live out the truth by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in our own marriage?

So we're specifically looking at lies that divide us, that kind of cause us to drift more intentionally than we would really like to be drifting. *[chuckles]* We are prone to drift, like you said in the opening, towards sin, towards isolation from each other. So what are those-

**Ryan:**

Something needs to change in the internal makeup of a marriage for the drift to not be the default. Now, one could say that even as for generic Christians, people who are endowed by the Holy Spirit, we're striving to walk by the Spirit and the Spirit is sanctifying us in an ongoing way, even for them, we could say that the drift is to walk in the flesh.

Okay, I'll take that, but I also want to, I guess, maybe contrast that with another view that I think could be equally as true. And it's this. I touched on this in one of the first books we wrote. The other chapter was Rocks, Rockets, and the Gravity of Belief. And that was in a book that we wrote way back. It was called *Two As One*. That's a devotional.

And the whole premise of that chapter was, if you're... So where did the title come from? Say you have this rock and your job is to keep the rock, you know, in the air as long as possible. So what do you do? You think, "Okay, I'm gonna throw it and I'll throw as high as I can." Well, just a matter of time till it comes back down. Like I want to get a lighter rock and throw it. It doesn't matter the size of the rock, really. But no matter what, gravity will always bring it back down to earth.

So we think, okay, well, instead I'm going to strap a rocket to this thing. I'm going to engineer wings, I'm going to put a nosecone on it, I'm going to shoot this thing up, I'm gonna give it wings to glide and I'm going to keep it up longer. Well, it's only a matter of time until that rock comes back down. So the premise of that chapter and the premise of this talk today is that until the gravity changes, that rock will always go back to the ground.

So in marriage, we can change the gravity. I mean, we don't have to live by the world's script. We don't have to live by our flesh. We live by the spirit. We live in lockstep with the spirit. We live in light of the gospel. And what that does is it takes our whole vision of reality in the flesh and flips it upside down and says, Christ... *[laughs]* If you're watching this, I'm sorry. But I'm going to leave it in. Christ flips things so that they are the other way. I mean, that gravity now is not pulling us down, but instead, it's pulling us toward Christ, pulling us up, sort of pulling us apart, we can be pulled together.

So that was a bit of a side trip. But I think it's important to understand that our underlying beliefs will always drive our behavior.

**Selena:** Absolutely.

**Ryan:** So when our behavior crops up and we sin, it's not... we are not-

**Selena:** It points back us back to what-

**Ryan:** We need to mortify the sin by looking at the belief that undergirds the sin. The belief maybe an autonomy, my own personal autonomy that Christ isn't truly Lord, sin is not truly bad, whatever that is. That being said, lie number one. Here's lie number one. You wanna read, Sel?

**Selena:** Sure. "I can't be transparent because I'm trying to keep what little peace we have." So again, this is See-Through Marriage, talking about transparency, experiencing the freedom and joy of being fully known and fully loved. So being known in marriage. One of the lies that we can believe in order to, I think, avoid living in the truth but... ironically, it causes more division, it causes more, I think, pain and disunity-

**Ryan:** Right. We think that by lying we're keeping the unity but really it's-

**Selena:** Right. So that lie is I can't be transparent because I'm trying to keep what little peace we have. All the peacekeepers and those that hate confrontation and conflict, raise your hand, right? That's where we fall under is this lie. We fear that if we're going to be honest, it's just going to rock the boat and I just don't have the energy, the time, the wherewithal, we don't have the connection, I don't know that that conversation would go out right. Insert whatever your struggle is and you're just like, I just don't want to poke that bear.

But the lie is that if you don't poke it and you don't deal with it and you don't shine the light of truth of God's capital T Truth on the situation, it's only going to make it worse, it's only going to agitate your marriage, it's going to bring you guys further apart. And you're not actually learning how to cope and deal with the truth of the matter, of the sin that is festering inside either you, your spouse, or your marriage.

**Ryan:** Because this lie, you don't actually make... you don't deal with it. So anyone who gets... if you've ever read any sort of like military, you know, novels or scene, movies or talk to people in the military, if you're ever in a convoy and you're going through the mountains and you get ambushed, you don't stop at that point. You have to go through it. You have to go through it as quickly as

you can, get to the other side and then turn back. You know, I'm assuming then you squashed the opposition, so to speak.

So in this way, like we don't want to go around the problem and keep avoiding it. Go through it. So the analogy that we use, we actually talk about a couple. So, John and Vanessa, they were the couple in the book. They're not a real couple. If they are real, they're pseudonyms. They're probably not real because that's generally the [00:10:00] idea in books.

**Selena:** Yeah. No, it's not based on anybody specific. I think it was just a generalization of problems that we see in marriage in a lot of women and men.

**Ryan:** And the point is that she is kind of dealing with her own self kind of stuff and she's feeling overwhelmed with being a wife, being a mother with whatever that means in on their life. And John is striving for a promotion. He's busy, he's working hard. They're kind of ships-

**Selena:** Passing in the night.

**Ryan:** ...passing in the night. Eventually they drift. So their communication suffers, their sex life suffers, their unity suffers, their emotional intimacy, all that suffers. But in that moment, Vanessa might be thinking or you might be thinking, "I don't want to bring this up because I can just see the fight that it's going to bring. I can just see the issues that's going to create. I can just see the division that's going to create."

And we're here to tell you that you're probably right. But the wrong premise in that is that if I don't create disunity, it's better. In this case, it's better to deal with that infection so the wound can heal. Otherwise, you use the word fester and I think it's so appropriate here. It will continue to fester and eventually you get septic. Eventually you've got an infection that is riddling your marriage and it will only lead to more death.

**Selena:** I think that approach often comes from a place of desperation. You know, we want to have control of the situation. And Ryan's been so good to encourage me in I think just simply taking the offense and not always been on the defense for things. So how can I be on the offense knowing that I have the truth of God? I'm in a covenant with my husband, like, okay, here's the struggle. Let's take some time. Let's try to ease the blow as much as we can, but also not be afraid of it.

Okay, we're going to take some time away from the kids. We're going to set aside some time to talk. I need your full attention. We need to kind of get through some of this. You may not like it, we may not like it, but let's try to

keep our wits about us and be loving. And remember that we're dealing with this to reconcile and to build unity, not to create a fight and a competition of who's better and whatnot. Like, we want connection, we want unity. We want freedom from this continual cycle of, you know, being divided. And what you're trying to keep, the peace, that's not real peace. And so we want peace-

**Ryan:** It's a counterfeit piece.

**Selena:** Yes. Yes.

**Ryan:** I'll leave it at that. It's well said. All right, lie number two. "I need the time alone so I can work on myself." I need the time alone so I can work on myself. As Selena gets the baby into a sleepy spot here, I can think of many examples in my own life where this has been my own thinking—I believed this life.

**Selena:** Oh, yeah.

**Ryan:** Early on in our marriage, I'm sad to say, I'm not immune to the common male struggle these days. Well, actually, I'm glad to say that God has completely delivered me from any sort of even desire to look at pornography. Thank God. It's been about, I'll say, a decade or more.

**Selena:** Thank you, Lord.

**Ryan:** Thank you, Lord. But early on in our marriage, that wasn't the case, and I don't need to qualify it. I will say that any pornography addiction is too much for marriage. But thankfully I wasn't like decade's into it, right? So there is a very real physiological rewiring of the brain that happens for anyone that travels the same dopamine trails often enough.

But for me, I thought, you know, I've talked to many men who think this. And this could go toward any topic, but we'll talk about pornography addiction. A guy thinks, "Well, I'm addicted to pornography. I know that if I told my wife, it would devastate her. So what I need to do is I just need to work on it by myself so I can get better, I can figure it out, and then I can go to her maybe three months into being clean, six months into being clean, and I can tell her in the past this was a problem and I want you to know about it." That's a lie.

**Selena:** Well, it's a lie, why? Because it relies on your own strength and pride and your own resolve to battle this addiction. And I think, like with anything, I mean, women, what's... I know that women struggle with pornography, but for me, my personality bent is like I don't want to, and especially within culture, like I don't want to show my mess to everyone. I don't want to show them how I'm struggling or how I'm weak. I want to show them the Instagram-worthy photos

and the social media that got me winning in life, you know, goals, all that kind of stuff.

And it's like to show even my spouse... I mean, it just feeds that pride and that wall of like, No, I'm going to get this together. I'm going to do it. I'm going to be the one. And God's like, "No, no, this is a lie. You can't do it on your own. Like, you can't break this addiction on your own, nor should you, because I didn't create you to do that on your own," right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** He's given us community. He's given us-

**Ryan:** Amen. And marriage is an instance of community that I think is especially equipped to deal with even the toughest sins in our lives because the covenant is strong. If we understand covenant rightly, it is strong. Love is purifying. If we understand love, we apply love, biblically speaking, we know what love mean... So love is the fuel for sanctification whereas the covenant is the arena within which that sanctification takes place.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** It's the platform for that sanctification to happen. So trying to say, I'm going to work on it alone, you're basically saying, I'm going to do the hardest thing in my life away from the most important person in my life for that person.

**Selena:** Hello, help us. You're missing out on the beautiful-

**Ryan:** God made for Adam a helper fit for him.

**Selena:** Well, and you're missing out on the beautiful process and journey of repentance with one another. And I think that God is so good to use our sin to bring us together through repentance, through humility, and through being transparent, being honest about the struggle that you have. Again, husband admits addiction to his wife, a wife can throw it in his face, can be... it's okay to be hurt by that. I think that's a very real and valid and human response. But we can't wallow in that. The Lord is leading us out of that to say, "Okay, I'm here to help you. I'm here to be your sidekick." So how do we start, you know, working through this so that you're successful or our unity is not disrupted, that we can be even more unified in this area of intimacy?"

**Ryan:** Well said. A picture comes to mind. And you're going to hate this. I'm sorry. You're going to hate this. Indiana Jones in the pit of snakes.

- Selena:** Nightmare guys.
- Ryan:** She hates snakes. Are you snake-phobic?
- Selena:** I guess. Bhaarr. There's nothing... It just. Yeah, I don't know. Just kind of cringing.
- Ryan:** Serpents in the garden. So, anyway, I'm picturing Indiana Jones in a pit. So you're in a pit, you're struggling with sin, but there are vipers, they're biting you, they're killing you. And if we view sin correctly, it will have the same gravity of being in that moment. Like these things are killing me. So in that moment, what do you do? You think, "Nope. Don't help me. I'm good. I'm going to find my way out."
- Selena:** Wrong view of sin. There is the lie. There is the lie.
- Ryan:** "I just got bit one time. That was in the neck. One's on. I'm good. Don't throw a rope. I'm going to climb out." How foolish is that?
- Selena:** Right?
- Ryan:** Whereas if you're getting ravaged by sin and you are unable—addiction does this—you're unable to conquer it, now, by the power of Holy Spirit, you can. He's given you community. He's given you your spouse to help you with that. So what do you do? You reach your hand up and you say, "Throw me in line. Help me. Let's deal with this together. I'm dying. The poison is killing me." So that's lie number two is "I need time alone. It's like, I'm working on myself." Instead, you need each other to work on whatever is driving you apart.
- Selena:** God's given to each other for a reason.
- Ryan:** Yeah, it's good. So let's go to our lie number three. This one's insidious. Do you wanna read it?
- Selena:** "My marriage isn't that bad. It's definitely not as bad as theirs." *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Oh, man. Comparison crushes everyone involved and is an insidious tool the enemy uses to keep us living in the dark.
- Selena:** It's not an accurate standard.
- Ryan:** No. Okay,
- Selena:** You'll always lose and you'll always be crushed by it.



- Ryan:** Going to the gym, depending on your orientation, you go to the gym, and if you're oriented toward thinking you're awesome, you're gonna look at all the weak people and say, "Look how awesome I am. I'm totally awesome."
- Selena:** Insecurity.
- Ryan:** Or if you're orientated toward feeling insecure, you're gonna look at all the huge fit people and think, "I'm totally a slob, I'm out of shape." You're going to compare yourself, you're going to get knocked down...
- Selena:** So no it's a-
- Ryan:** Comparison does nothing good because-
- Selena:** It's a lose-lose.
- Ryan:** Who is the right comparison? Who's the right person for us to compare to? Jesus Christ. How do we compare to Christ? Not well. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Not well. *[laughs]* We cannot.
- Ryan:** So what does that do? That drives us further into the gracious arms of our loving God who has said, Yes, you're a sinner. I see that you're a sinner, and that's why I sent my son to wash you of that sin, to bring you into right relationship with me, to sanctify you and free you from that sin. So by comparing to Christ, we actually see ourselves rightly. It creates right movement, right momentum in our hearts.
- Selena:** I mean, you have to have that doctrine of man understanding who you are and the doctrine of God, like who God is, who I am as man. You're reading Jeremiah... So we're asking like, how can you emulate Christ if you don't know him first? We read in Jeremiah actually recently and then this is three years ago or whatever, that we wrote this. It's Jeremiah 9:20-
- Ryan:** We're currently in the thick of Jeremiah, which by the way, is the longest book of the Bible.
- Selena:** It's an awesome book.
- Ryan:** 33,000 words. That's like half of this book.
- Selena:** It's really good, though. I mean, you see the character of God. I mean, it's incredible. So Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the Lord, let not the wise man

boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his mate, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boast boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord." So when we compare ourself to others or boasting in our own abilities, we're boasting in our own strengths-

**Ryan:** Or, I want to jump in, or we're boasting in someone else's strengths. Meaning the boasting is completely wrong, it's completely off pace.

**Selena:** Doesn't Paul say boast in our weaknesses? That's what we're supposed to actually... like, if we are going to boast-

**Ryan:** But why? Because that then makes much of Christ and it becomes a backward way of Paul saying, boast in Christ.

**Selena:** Right. It's not about me. It's always about Him.

**Ryan:** Right. And so the lie as it goes is that I, you know... We have our struggles. We have our struggles, but-

**Selena:** We're doing all right.

**Ryan:** We can coast because look at that train wreck over there. *[laughs]* How-

**Selena:** I don't mean to laugh. But that's exactly true.

**Ryan:** How backwards is that? I'm cool with us having a train wreck a few years down the line because look at that train wreck.

**Selena:** Well, the fact of the matter is that we're really all train wrecks. And understanding... I mean, I know that marriage-

**Ryan:** But from the salvation standpoint, yes, we're all train wrecks.

**Selena:** Yeah, we're all train wrecks. And marriages go through, yes-

**Ryan:** There is a way to have a healthy marriage and not be a train wreck.

**Selena:** Thank you. That's how I meant. Salvation standard with God, we are all train wrecks. Comparison. We're not perfect-

**Ryan:** The point you're making is that we can't think morally higher of ourselves. And that this caused us to see with eyes wide open, saying like, I am not prone to

becoming that trainwreck. I'm not immune to becoming that trainwreck. I need instead to deal with this thing as it is and look at Christ as my comparison, not the Joneses, not the Smiths, not anyone else.

**Selena:** See, this is why we do a podcast together. If I did one of my own, everybody, I would just get slammed up and down the internet because of the things that I say.

**Ryan:** So Matthew on Twitter, he's become kind of a Twitter friend of mine. Hey, if you're listening to this... He called out a comment you said. I said, I like to shoot from the hip and I didn't hear what you said, but you said "it's bad shooting" Then I said to him, I said, then breaking news, Selena is going to have her own podcast. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Don't leave me. Don't leave me.

**Ryan:** Those are the three lies. We need to recap on the lies. Let me go back to the top here. Lie number one is this. It's a lie so don't believe it. I can't be transparent because I'm trying to keep what little piece we have. We're here to tell you that's not real peace. That's a counterfeit peace. You need true transparency to have true peace. Lie number two-

**Selena:** I need the time alone so I can work on myself. And that is untrue as well, because you cannot fix yourself.

**Ryan:** Amen.

**Selena:** Bottom line, only Christ can do that.

**Ryan:** Lie number three: My marriage isn't that bad. It's definitely not as bad as theirs. That's an insidious lie because we're comparing and giving glory in all the wrong places. Instead, we need to make much of Christ-

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** ...and realize that without His help, without us just looking at ourselves in light of Christ, everything else is fruitless. And we're not called the fruitlessness, we're called the fruitfulness.

**Selena:** That is how we begin to walk in the light. And if you don't know the light-

**Ryan:** Well, Christ is the light. And I wish I had John 1 right in front of me. But he basically says that the light has become flesh and the light has dwelt among us. And John the Baptist said, "I am not the light but instead I'm here to tell

you of the one who is the light. And it's really cool because in Greek there's this language that's talking about... it's the near demonstrative pronoun where he's saying this one, this one, this one. This one came into the... John the Baptist came in... So John the Apostle is writing the book, John the Baptist is a character and He's real.

**Selena:** The person in the book.

**Ryan:** The person in the book. And John the Apostle is writing this one, John the Baptist came onto the scene and he used to preach and all these things. And then John the Baptist said, "I'm not the light, but that one is the light." And then all of a sudden you see Jesus moving to the fore, being the near demonstrative. And John the Baptist is now that far demonstrative.

**Selena:** Gosh, even the language, so beautiful.

**Ryan:** That one's now said that this one is the light. This one is... the flesh should be...

**Selena:** You see the lesser the more.

**Ryan:** [inaudible] became flesh. So it's-

**Selena:** It's a reiterating of, like, let me...

**Ryan:** And it illustrates what happened in John 3:30 which is-

**Selena:** Let me be less, let Him be-

**Ryan:** May I decrease so that He can increase.

**Selena:** There it is. Once again, I can't have my own podcast. It's not my work. It's not my work.

**Ryan:** No, you'd be just fine. The point is, without the light, we are in the darkness. And we are not lights unto ourselves. We are utterly dead. We need light to shine into us to illuminate the word of God in our hearts, so that we might have soft hearts, we might then repent of our sin and turn to Christ. That's what it looks like to become a Christian is you repent of your sin and you say, Jesus, I need you now. You don't have to understand all the doctrines in the Bible to say, Jesus, I need you. But that's what it means to have the light. And it's from that point, the Holy Spirit dwells you and you begin to understand what it means to live in the light.

So if you don't have somebody in your life to talk to you, we do have a website for you. It's [thenewsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com). We do, however, recommend that if you do have somebody in your life-

**Selena:** Like a pastor, like a Christian friend who's eagerly waiting to talk to you and praying for you, no doubt.

**Ryan:** Yes, that you would go talk to them and say, "I heard this podcast and I want to know more about Jesus. Will you read the Bible with me? Start there. And then talk to that pastor and begin being disciple in Christ. I pray that you take that step.

Speaking of prayer, let's pray. Father God, thank you that you are light. Thank you that we can walk in your light, not because we have to somehow prove and justify ourselves, but we can walk in the way because you've said that we are justified. Our faith is in you. We are justified before our Holy God, and therefore we can walk in the light to experience freedom, we can experience relationship, we can experience sanctification based on what your word says in 1 John. Lord, we trust that we can walk in the light as He is in the light so that we can have fellowship with one another and be sanctified of all sin and be purified of all sin.

Lord, I pray for the husband and the wife struggling with isolation, struggling with believing these lies. That you would help them submit to your light, to learn what it means to be transparent in light of your gospel so that they can have true peace, they can have true closeness in their marriage, and truly glorify you as a result. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** Thank you so much for listening this far in. If you are this far in, we would be honored—and frankly, we need it—we'd be honored to have your partnership. Much of this ministry is possible because our partners have chosen to jump on board, to not just be passive recipients of this ministry. If we've helped you, if the Lord is leading you to this, you can help, I'm telling you, honestly, you can help sustain this ministry by going to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](http://fiercemarriage.com/partner). Our monthly patrons are one of the main ways that we frankly are not in the red every month now. We sell a lot of books, but I won't give you the details. The partners are the difference.

**Selena:** They are.

**Ryan:** So thank you so much for that. Please consider that. Otherwise, if you're not feeling led to do that, if you don't have the means to do it, we will continue showing up because the Lord is gracious.

**Selena:** Pray for us. We need your prayers. Prayers don't cost anything, except your time-

**Ryan:** This is true. Pray for us.

**Selena:** ...and your mental space, but-

**Ryan:** We would be so bold to ask a prayer. But that said, 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**
  - Proverbs 4:23
  - Jeremiah 9:23-24
  
- **Recommended resource**
  - [thenewsisgood.com](https://thenewsisgood.com)

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