

INTIMACY WITHOUT OBLIGATION

<https://fiercemarriage.com/intimacy-without-obligation>

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Ryan: Today we were tackling the 800-pound gorilla in the room. *[Selena laugh]* Carol. *[laughs]*

Selena: Carol *[laughs]*

Ryan: Or the idea of intimacy without obligation. I think we have this notion in culture, you know, and even within Christian culture that when we get into marriage, okay, if you've been recently married or you're engaged and you're holding out as is right and is good to not have sex prior to marriage, you're holding out, you get into marriage and you're expecting it to be always just awesome, right?

Selena: Yeah. Wild and crazy.

Ryan: Well, that's you expecting that.

Selena: No. *[both laughs]* Mission accom... what is it? What was I gonna say?

Selena: Challenge accepted.

Ryan: There it is. Challenge accepted. *[laughs]* Thank you. So today we're gonna be talking about-

Selena: Mission-

Ryan: Yeah, mission accomplished. *[laughs]* It's a little presumptuous. *[both laughs]*. Anyway, today we're talking about this: intimacy without obligation. What if we do experience obligation when we-

Selena: Yeah, what do we do with that?

Ryan: What do we do with it? And is it right to feel? What are the right questions to be asking around this? And more importantly, what are the right answers? So we're gonna give you all the right answers here today in the Fierce Marriage podcast. See you on the other side.

[00:01:17] <music>

- Selena:** Feels like a lot of pressure. *[Ryan Laugh]* "Give you all the right answers." Like maybe we'll try to shine truth here and the right answers will come.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. We didn't mean to say that we'll actually give you the right... you're looking for answers.
- Selena:** Go to your Bible.
- Ryan:** No, I'm kidding.
- Selena:** And-
- Ryan:** No, we do intend to be helpful today. So if you don't know who we are, I am Ryan. This is my lovely wife Selena. We are the Fredericks. Welcome to the Fierce Marriage Podcast. If you're listening to this, you're not aware, we actually have a YouTube channel. It's called The Fierce Family. And you can get marriage and parenting content there twice a week. It's probably the most lively, best place on the internet. It's like, if you're anywhere on the internet, you're gonna want to be on the Fierce Family channel.
- Selena:** You're gonna want to be there. Everything's happening. Everything fierce is happening there.
- Ryan:** Yeah. I mean, I'm talking like dozens of views per week.
- Selena:** Per week.
- Ryan:** It's amazing. No, actually God's been glowing that faithfully. We're actually almost to... we just eclipsed 11,000 subscribers.
- Selena:** Wow.
- Ryan:** And thank you YouTubers.
- Selena:** Praise God.
- Ryan:** And I think we're well on our way toward 12,000. So the Lord is good.
- Selena:** Praise God. Praise God.
- Ryan:** But you might not care about that. So if you're watching, hit the subscribe button if you're not subscribed already. We'll just move on with the rest of this episode. Okay. *[Selena laugh]* So where did this topic come from? Friends, in the podcasting world, the behemoth of the podcasting world is Apple

Podcasts, aka used to be called iTunes. I'm glad they shuttered that piece of trash *[laughs]* software. But the point is, in Apple Podcasts, they only allow you to feed into Apple Podcasts 300 episodes.

Selena: Oh.

Ryan: And we are at episode 3... Well, currently at 315, but there's a few other interviews in there. We're probably in episode 330 right now. So there's almost a year's worth of content that has been completely-

Selena: Taken away?

Ryan: ...from Apple Podcast. Now we still have the audio. Now, I'm just gonna be honest, it's not the best audio and or content we ever produced.

Selena: Kind of the beginning. It was the beginning of all of these things. Sorry. Every time you say Apple Pod, I'm like apple pie? What Apple pie?

Ryan: Apple Podcast.

Selena: Apple Podcast?

Ryan: Sounds delicious. *[Selena Laugh]* New idea, but that might good ideas folder for later.

Selena: Done.

Ryan: Anyway, so we're actually digging this up out of the old kind of episode archive. Plus we don't have videos for those. So we're gonna dig that up and we're gonna rehash the topic, update it. The episode is like five years old, so we're gonna do that. Also, we had some folks write in about this. So this is kind of a nice joining content.

Selena: It's interesting how content conflicts and tensions and all things in marriage don't actually go away. They just kind of evolve and then come back. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Yeah. So here's the questions. I'm gonna pose the question in two different ways. Number one, what should I do if my spouse and I don't desire sex the same amounts or with the same frequency? And two is, how can we be intimate without feeling obligated? So we're gonna tackle that. We actually have a crying baby in the other room. So, quick break. Magic *[laughs]* And we're back.

So we just asked those two questions. Now I want to start with this assurance to you if you're feeling this way, or if you were to feel this way in the future. You are not alone. Maybe that sounds obvious to say. But if you're a young couple or you've never experienced this, let me just tell you, all healthy couples experience this at some point. And more than once.

Selena: Yeah. I think it's very [inaudible] to say it's normal to experience this.

Ryan: And it's not a sin. Now, we're gonna talk about maybe how sin could be informing this situation. But it's not a sin to say we want to be intimate, but we don't feel the same level of-

Selena: Desire for the intimacy.

Ryan: ...desire for it at the moment. So as we approach this, I see two kind of avenues of inquiry. Okay. So the first one is... You know, it has to do with the desire, number one in the experience. So the first avenue is couple who feels this way will wonder why their desire is less. In other words, am I less desirable? Like a wife or a husband could feel that way and ask this. Like they've been noticing. "Am I not as attractive? Are they finding me less, you know... to use secular terms, are we falling out of love?" Those types of doubts will creep in. Or we'll ask ourselves because this desire is lacking, is something else wrong in our lives? Are we drifting from one another? Okay. Valid questions. That's the first kind of avenue of inquiry.

The second one would be the experience. The couple, you'll have a different experience of intimacy when the desire isn't your driving force. And then you'll start to question the experience. In other words, is it legitimate? Is this a legitimate experience of intimacy if I don't feel it emotionally? Or physically in some cases. Does our experience validate the act itself? Now, many don't think about intimacy in these terms, so I think it could be helpful. Or is the value of intimacy, should it be derived from somewhere else? And if so, where? Okay. So two levels of inquiry based on the desire itself, and then the experience as a result of that desire.

So now let's ask them these questions. First big question is this, is what does scripture say about this? Does scripture speak on this, Selena?

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Does it? *[laughs]* It does in fact. 1 Corinthians 7:5. Why don't you read that?

- Selena:** "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."
- Ryan:** Good. That's a perfect passage for this. And it's very instructive for us and it's important to the context. So in this context, the Corinthians had stated previously, it's good for a man to not be with a woman, but Paul then says "only if temptation isn't an issue". So the heart of this passage is to work together, husband and a wife, toward mutual righteousness. In other words, if there's an experience of temptation, the terminus of that desire is rightfully in your spouse.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And if that terminus is no longer there, meaning that your spouse is depriving you, then that temptation could materialize into full-blown sin. In that passage, okay, so do not deprive one another, now this is interesting. We had a discussion about this. Note the deprivation dynamic. So the example that I used is that if I'm starving and you have all the food, I am not in a position to deprive you.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** You are in that position to deprive. Like you are flushed with food, you have all the assets. *[Selena Laugh]* I have no assets.
- Selena:** Don't I know it? *[Ryan Laugh]*
- Ryan:** So only the spouse with the goods, so to speak, can do the depriving. I.e., that's the person who wants less. Now, this can go both ways. I think tendency would tell us that it ends up being mostly men desiring wives because men's sex drives tend to be higher. They tend to be more visually, more easily-
- Selena:** Yeah, they're more easy-
- Ryan:** ...motivated, I'll say.
- Selena:** Yeah. Gas pedal's not as sticky. We'll put it that way. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** That's a good one because I feel like when it's hard to push the gas pedal down, it's really hard. But then once it's down, it's hard to get it back up. *[both laughs]* So the impetus is on the one with less desire. And that should be where we couch this conversation. Because it's not about taking, it's about giving. Paul

is not saying, husbands, if your wife is depriving you, like you go tell her, You owe me. He's not saying that.

Selena: No.

Ryan: And Paul's not speaking specifically and exclusively to wives-

Selena: Right.

Ryan: ...saying, don't deprive your husbands. He's speaking to husbands and wives equally saying, don't deprive each other. Don't deprive each other. And he's talking to the one who's holding the value to give the value away. And that value, of course, is to offer yourself. That's the very hard in marriage, right, is you're offering yourself to one another freely, generously without reservation.

Selena: Well, and again, you know, it's a call to the Christian to die to self once again. Right? We'll unpack this a little bit more as far as like feelings and emotions go. Because again, there's plenty of times where well, maybe one of us doesn't feel like having sex. Right? Like one's putting out the vibe, the other's just kind of not picking it up or doesn't want to, just doesn't have a desire to.

But as, you know, a spouse, as a wife, we're just gonna put it this way because I'm the one that doesn't have as much drive. I mean, that's typically how the chips fall at least in our marriage. So I have choices to make when we're in that situation. You know, I can deprive and I can just do it and be like, "It's fine. He'll get over it. We're fine. No big deal." And let it just float out into the air and not give another thought to it. Or I can get my emotions under control and understand that this is one way that I could love my husband and I could give to him and I could be generous with him. Right? The emotions, they're tricky.

Ryan: They are. And we'll talk about that down here a little bit. I just want to say, as a husband, if you... So, Selena, this is always... It always gets really personal, but hey, we're a fierce marriage podcast. This is what we do. You're very kind to me in this way, in that you're very generous to me in that you have... I can count on one hand the times when I... and it's not even out of deprivation. It's like, "Hey, you know what? I get it, but I'm super tired and like kids, and... There's a billion other things that you-

Selena: It takes a lot for me to say no.

Ryan: And it's not even ever a no. It's like, how about another time? *[laughs]*

Selena: It's a yes, but not right now. *[laughs]*

- Ryan:** So I want to acknowledge that, that I feel very blessed in that, and it would be excruciating to me as your husband if you weren't that way. I'm just gonna say that now. That's not meant to... take that for what it is. Okay. Because I'm just saying, as a husband, if my wife always... you always had that ability and never acted on it, you always had the ability to be-
- Selena:** Giving.
- Ryan:** Well, to be, yeah, the terminus of my sexual desire., I'll say, like the endpoint of that. Because you are the target of it. I don't look at pornography. I don't look at shows that have nudity. I don't entertain those types of thoughts. That's just something that I've purged from my life by the grace of God. I only have you.
- Selena:** So if you were stingy with that, I would be miserable. I'd be miserable. And take that for what it is. So I'm thankful for that. So as a spouse giving to, if you have less desire, just know that that's a huge blessing to them if you're generous to them, even though you may not have that desire. So do you have something you want to add?
- Selena:** Well, I'm just thinking, okay, somebody's probably thinking, well, I feel obligated. Is that really generosity? So we're literally talking about: can you give without feeling obligated? Is generosity... I mean, I think by the very definition of it it's not an obligation.
- Ryan:** Well, because I'm a Christian, am I obligated to worship Jesus? I'm not. So I'm just gonna say it's categorical obligations. Like, "are obligations bad?" is what I'm trying to say?
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** Am I obligated to obey Christ?
- Selena:** Right. Well, I think we've equated obligation with our emotions, with what is right. Like we've just made those all an equation.
- Ryan:** Right. So generally, if I feel obligated, that thing is-
- Selena:** Which isn't correct. Yeah.
- Ryan:** The point I'm trying to make is that if you feel like you should do something, that's not bad to feel that way. The question is, why would you act on that feeling? Why would you respond to that obligation? Are you responding from

a place of bitterness and resentment or are you responding from a place of gladness and joy? I think we can respond from both of those places, and it is a bit of a... It's a heart thing. So-

Selena: Absolutely. As with every challenge and sin struggle.

Ryan: Of course. So we ask these two big questions or two lines of questioning in terms of the desire itself and the experience itself. But let's go a little deeper. So I would ask a couple who comes to us and says, we don't desire sex in the same way, in the same frequency, and it's becoming a problem. My first question to them is, why is there an asymmetric desire? Now I know the assumption is, of course, everyone physiologically is different. They're wired. I'll just say that's kind of the baseline assumption.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: But then I would look even further and say, let's look at your circumstances. Now there's physiological desire and I think there's also emotional desire and they may or may not align. Because a woman could be emotionally desirous of her husband and the intimacy... and we've had this conversation before. Like, you want to connect, although there's not a lot of physical need there. It's more just emotionally you want to connect.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So I would ask this couple, let's look at your circumstances, let's look at habits, let's look at your communication ruts that you might be in. And I'd say do a personal inventory.

Selena: What are you talking about when you say habits? How do you connect habits or how are your habits causing division or the symmetrical desire? What kind of habits are you talking about?

Ryan: Well, a lot of times there's habits that are just maybe unhealthy. Like maybe you're staying up far too late and you're both tired all the time. Or maybe you're overdrinking and you are-

Selena: Yeah. Any additional zap.

Ryan: Any additional zap.

Selena: Any desire? Any, I think, godly and good desire. *[laughs]* Addiction is a way to do that.

- Ryan:** We'll talk about this later but even in terms of sneaking snacks, I'll say. And what I mean by that is oftentimes if there's a husband who's addicted to pornography or a wife who's addicted to pornography, they're satisfying that desire somewhere else and so they're experiencing a lower desire for their wives. And it's not just a function of, oh, I've exhausted myself, meaning not that I'm tired, but I've spent myself sexually on the internet.
- Selena:** Spent the good part of myself.
- Ryan:** And it's spent. I no longer have desire sexually at all because I've already given that away. It's a function of that. But it's also a function of I've made a habit out of objectifying women and now I'm objectifying my wife without even realizing it. And she's no longer attracted to me because she is not the object that I desire.
- Selena:** Same.
- Ryan:** And that's antithetical to the type of love a husband should have toward his wife. That he should be desirous of her. That she should be his standard of beauty. She should be the object of his affection. And then he should serve her within that desire, not seeking to extract from her value, but to bring himself to her.
- Selena:** No, that's good. I think it's important to identify some of those habits because I know that when I get less generous, less patient, feeling overwhelmed, it's usually because I've probably stayed up too late the night before either reading or watching something and got sucked into it. And those decisions have a payment and a consequence.
- Ryan:** I'm amazed at how quickly like 30 or 40 minutes can go by when you're watching like YouTube short.
- Selena:** Scrolling or watching. Yes.
- Ryan:** Or Instagram reels or TikTok. We're not on TikTok, but I'm sure that's just as bad or worse. So that's one is if you're snacking elsewhere. Another reason why the desire might be as asymmetrical is if you're just in a funk. So sometimes you can just be in a low-grade funk. There's no big issue. There's not like we are... we just haven't hit a groove and we just need to get back on track.
- Ryan:** Yeah. I think you go through seasons of that again. That is pretty normal as long as you're kind of asking the right questions and understanding what's happening. Because for us, sometimes it's just recognizing, you know, we're

just kind of feeling this kind of, ugh, but I still love you, I still, you know, want to be close to you. But that can cause one of us to desire intimate more than the other.

Ryan: So oftentimes when you're in a funk, you don't really know how you're gonna get out of it. You're just like, Is this always gonna be it now? I've found that laughter is probably the quickest way for us to get out of the phone. You hear us quote The Office all the time. Like, we go back and we're just like, let's just revisit this because we know it's gonna make us laugh. Or let's just find something funny. Let's watch a comedian or something. That ends up kind of getting out of your own head and you end up laughing. And laughter has a way of connecting you so quickly. And just friendship really.

Selena: And disarming you, I think.

Ryan: Or getting out and doing something together. So getting out of that funk. Another reason why you might have an asymmetrical desire is hormones.

Selena: How dare you! *[Ryan laughs]* How dare you go here?

Ryan: I'm not talking about you. Of course, I'm talking about-

Selena: Postpartum hormones.

Ryan: Postpartum is real.

Selena: Pregnancy hormones.

Ryan: Life changes, you know-

Selena: Just bodily hormones. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: You deal with that a lot. *[Ryan Laugh]*

Ryan: Yes, very much.

Selena: Your hormones are raging.

Ryan: They're raging. *[both laughs]* You know, I just started at puberty when I was 15 and never stopped. *[both laughs]* The life of puberty. So it's a huge factor. And sometimes I can feel like it's a dismissal and think, Oh, it's just hormones. Right? Hormones are real. God wired our bodies.

- Selena:** I think it goes both ways. You can either over qualify and be like, Oh, this is... I can't control these. This is what's going on. And you can just like go raging and crazy or you can just dismiss and ignore it. Which is also unhealthy. I think you just have to acknowledge it and bring it to the table and understand and have grace for one another and try to walk through it as smoothly as you can.
- Ryan:** Yeah. On those same similar lines, stress, workload, your schedules, kids are causing chaos in the home as kids do, *[Selena Laugh]* all those things can contribute to an asymmetrical desire. Like. I know there's times in, in seasons I go through where I'm working extraordinarily hard and I'm just completely smoked and tired and done.
- Selena:** And I am like, "Come on, babe. *[Ryan chuckles]* Let's get this party started."
- Ryan:** "I will serve you in this way." *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** We laugh because that's never the case. He could be like on his deathbed and I could be like, "Hey," and he'd be like, "Hey."
- Ryan:** Boof. I'm ever in a coma. Just invite me into our nuptial chamber *[both laughs]* and I will hop out of that bed and jog over. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, gosh.
- Ryan:** You're just that good.
- Selena:** I'm just that good.
- Ryan:** The final one will be communication degradation or lack of connection. We talked about this early on, but there can be deeper levels of funk that you can get into where maybe you've been fostering a really unhealthy communication atmosphere in your home.
- Selena:** Habit even. Sarcastic.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And you're not talking about anything of material or real value. Yeah, sarcasm, and just maybe course joking or maybe... You know, you just not spent time-
- Selena:** Even talking about the things of God. Even deeper things than just the schedule and the meals and the carding kids around and whatnot. So marriage is so much more and we get to enjoy that piece.

- Ryan:** So on the second line of encore we have about the experience itself. So here's a big question. Is your experience worse if your desire is less? In other words, does that invalidate the experience? So if you've got a wife, like Selena mentioned... Selena you mentioned times when you've just been, you know, you decided it's very unromantic. But you've said, I've decided to just be here. And there's times when I'll talk to and be like, "Is this okay? Are you okay?" Because I want to make sure that you're okay." And you just are trying to say, "This is good." And you tell me like, "It's fine, it's good. And I just-
- Selena:** "It's more about you than me right now." Is that an okay statement to say?
- Ryan:** "To be honest, I don't always like it, but I understand it." [both laughs]
- Selena:** Again, it's a heart orientation. It's an attitude. Not praising myself. It's something that I've had to kind of grow into and understand that, you know, my desire is not always there, but his is, and I want to be a source of comfort. I want to give to him. I want to be generous towards him. I want to love him. When I remember and think of all the things that I'm grateful for about him, it becomes easier to give of myself to him.
- Ryan:** Hmm. And it occurs to me too, that I could-
- Selena:** Be grateful for me? Yes. [both laughs] Just kidding. He's always so grateful.
- Ryan:** It's true. I could be more grateful.
- Selena:** No. [laughs]
- Ryan:** But in those moments when... To be honest, I'd rather have your emotional, bodily engagement, like no holds barred every time. Like that's by far the best experience all around I feel like. But to insist that every time, to insist on that every time when you say, "It's more about you than me and that's fine. I'm just gonna give to you. This is us just being married, and I love you, but if you could just be okay with this level right now," for me to insist on "No, I want a higher level," that's selfish. It's demanding. I'm not serving you in that. So there's a way to serve you even though-
- Selena:** Well, and I think there's a way to lead out of that too. Like if that's a consistent level, if that's what your sex life is, then I think that it should be examined. Because it doesn't have to be the normal. I think that is, again-
- Ryan:** That's good. That's good.
- Selena:** ...a season.

Ryan: So to root this back in kind of the big picture, sex is not just sex It's the sign of the marital covenant. It's the ratification of that covenant saying. It's the stamp of the seal of that covenant. We are in a covenant together. So every time we are intimate, we are not just engaging in some physical act. It is a ceiling of that. It's a resealing of that covenant in a way.

So that's good because God made it good. It's objectively good and it's good to renew it, renew the sign, renew that commitment in that sort of way. So what I mean to say is it's not worse as in it's less meaningful in that it can be a different experience and maybe not as, I'll say not as good of an experience because it-

Selena: Well, define good. I don't think your experience can be worse. I think it can be less emotional.

Ryan: I think it's categorically different, to be honest.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: But even though you're still doing basically the same activity, it's categorically a different type of that activity. Does that make sense? Lie there's those times when you don't know where you end and your spouse begins. You're that intertwined, it's that intense, you're that like on the same wavelength. And then there's times when you're just getting down to business.

Selena: You're giving to one another. You're, yeah, getting down to business. That's, I think, okay as long as there's agreement around that and there's an understanding that this is not the norm and I love you and we're not going to just continue to... This is for today. This is not-

Ryan: That's good. That's good. Okay. So here's the encouragement out of this and maybe the challenge is that mature married people understand the objective value of intentional intimacy and the vulnerability and the generosity that it affords toward one another. They understand the objective value of that. They're not depending on a certain experience to evaluate it.

Selena: Right. You know that it's good, you know that it's purposeful because God said it is, and you know that it's something that you should engage in and you get to engage in. Sometimes it's a get to, sometimes it feels more should. But either way, I love that you said that, it is objectively true that God made it and it is good.

- Ryan:** Yeah. And of course we're right now assuming healthy motives all around because it could... I mean-
- Selena:** Yeah. I mean-
- Ryan:** A wife or a husband could manipulate with everything we've just said and saying like, Hey, these guys said it was objectively good. So you have to show up basically or-
- Selena:** Which we didn't say.
- Ryan:** We didn't say that.
- Selena:** Like anything, you can take words and manipulate. You have to hear the heart, you have to hear the premise, you have to hear the foundation that is rooted in the gospel, that is rooted in scripture. Again, the context of - what is it? 1 Corinthians 7, not depriving one another, not just "wife, don't deprive your husband" or "husband, don't deprive your wife." It's both of you. Get back to one another if you're not there. You'll go through seasons of one giving to another more, but get back to both being together the same level.
- Ryan:** That's good. So here's some practical help, and I want to wrap it up before you spend too much more time, is some affirmations again. So it's okay to be intimate in a functional way. That's okay. It's okay to serve one another through your sexual intimacy. That's okay. I'll say this. I think it's never... I'm just gonna say a blanket statement and I hope it's right. It's never right for a husband to demand sex from his wife, but it's also never right for a wife to deprive him without agreement per 1 Corinthians 7.
- Selena:** Mm-hmm.
- Ryan:** Now, there's been times when I've approached you and said, "Hey, this would be awesome for us tonight. *[both laughs]* I have a vision, me and you." And then you could say, "Hey, I'm catching your vision, but tonight's not a good night." Now I have a choice. So you have a choice, I have a choice. If you've made your choice and you've said, "Tonight's not a great night, I love you, but for whatever reason, can you agree with me that tonight's not a good night?" And I have a choice. I can either say, well, no, I'm not on board with that. I'm gonna either... You know, so now we have a fight or you know, we have something happening. I'm demanding it, or you're depriving, or both. But if you come to me and say, "I'm tired, will you please understand," we can then agree by agreement. Okay, I'm gonna be an understanding husband. I'm not gonna demand it from you.

- Selena:** I'm gonna be generous, understanding and giving and graceful and full of that-
- Ryan:** I'm gonna give to you in a different way.
- Selena:** But you also know that, again, that is not the normal. That is not the standard.
- Ryan:** Yes. And that would be-
- Selena:** And I'm saying that only because, again, one spouse could become demanding, which only ironically promotes more withholding and depriving. So, again, look at the patterns of your sex life. I hate using this word in these types talks. But what are the rhythms? What is the frequency and how are you able to kind of...? It's like a bank. You kind of give to each other. You have this credit and debit and sometimes like... I don't use it very often, but I feel like I can freely say, Hey, tonight is just bad, or today, I don't know, probably not gonna happen. Can we do it tomorrow? Or can we like set a time? That agreement, I think again, it's easier to come to.
- Ryan:** Well, frankly, we've gotten to the point in our marriage where I just know and I can tell and I wouldn't put it on you.
- Selena:** You don't usually ask me.
- Ryan:** Because I'm like, I can tell that you're really tired, so I'm not gonna just heap one more thing for you to feel bad about. Because even though you'll say, you know, I don't... So you start to read each other and give, before you even have to explicitly give. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Right. Your habits become more gracious and serving and generous.
- Ryan:** And also like, if I can look down on the horizon of our week and say, Okay, I think tomorrow night would probably be a better night given that no one's coming over or given whatever the circumstances or, you know... I can just not even bring it up now. And then if I don't see that on the horizon, I'll talk to you. I'll say, "Hey, when do you think would work well for us?"
- Selena:** Yeah. Absolutely.
- Ryan:** A few more affirmations real quick. It's okay to want sex even though your spouse doesn't. Just talk through it. Just keep talking through it. It's not less valuable of an experience because the drive or the desire is less. It's okay to experience it even with a reduced desire.

Here's another one. As I said this at the beginning is you're not abnormal, and in most cases that we've experienced this has an ebb and flow to it. It comes and goes. You'll have periods of intensity and periods of waning back and then intensity. Just talk through it. Go with it. Trust that the tide will return.

And then we have a few tangible tools. We've talked about this in the past, but maybe let's direct you to our website to check it out. Check out the spectrum of sex on fiercemarriage.com. That talks about the different kind of occasions and expectations around the sexual experience in a biblical marriage. And then establishing rhythms and routines for it. And Selena hates that one on this topic. But the point is, is like what's realistic for you? Like what's a good amount of frequency for you? What's healthy for you?

Selena: You know, one of my friends once said that, you know, a couple times a week is where we've sort of agreed. And then maybe a full week, like every day, once a year kind of just to be good for the marriage, you know?

Ryan: All right. Well, let's do it.

Selena: Challenge accepted. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Challenge accepted. Awesome. If you're listening to this and you're thinking this is crazy because how could spouses talk like this, how could you be asking for intimacy and then choosing to be generous in a way that it goes against everything that you feel, and even everything in terms of what the world would tell you, we're here to tell you that we have a faith that is otherworldly because we have a savior who is otherworldly. Although He was otherworldly, He is God, Jesus Christ is God, He entered flesh and lived a life that we couldn't live perfectly and died the death that we should have died so that we might be saved.

That's what it means to be Christian is a place your faith in Christ and His work on the cross. Christ didn't stay dead. He rose again. And He promises to rise His people again to new life when He returns as the mighty king that He is. That's all I'll say about that here. But if you want to become a Christian, here's how. Find a friend, talk to them about it. Ask them to-

Selena: A Christian friend, they've been praying for you, they want to talk to you.

Ryan: Talk to a Christian friend, ask them to read the Bible with you. Find a good Bible-preaching pastor. If you don't have either of those things, we have a website, thenewsisgood.com. Check it out. thenewsisgood.com.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the gift of intimacy. Thank you for the gift of marriage. Not in that order. [both chuckles] I thank you that you've designed these things, not just arbitrarily but for our flourishing and you've graciously given us the ability to enjoy them and to serve each other in them, and to even be sanctified through our struggles when it comes to our intimate lives together.

I pray that the couples listening to this, that they would flourish in this area. That they wouldn't fight the typical battles in their intimate lives, but they would find clarity and strength, and truth in your word, and they would serve one another fueled by your Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus. I pray for couples who don't know you, that they would come to know you and place their faith in you, Jesus Christ, that they might be saved. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. Longer episodes, so I'm gonna let it go. However, we are almost to 300 patrons.

Selena: Hmm. Praise God.

Ryan: We're 299. So if you're still watching this, if you're still listening and you feel called, we would be honored if you would go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. There are benefits. Our goal, I would love to get to 400 patrons by the end of the year. Guys, it's crazy. God has been so gracious. But I'm just amazed at how unpredictable this line of work that we've chosen is. So all of that may mean a ton to us. There's benefits including early access to our events, which we have coming up and there's... anyway, check that out. [Fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner).

With 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**
 - 1 Corinthians 7:5

- **Recommended resource**
 - [The Spectrum of Sex](#)
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

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