

YOUR MARRIAGE COVENANT IS FAR MORE STRONGER THAN YOU THINK

<https://fiercemarriage.com/your-marriage-covenant-is-far-stronger-than-you-think>

[00:00:00]

Selena: Do you ever forget-

Ryan: Never.

Selena: ...why you're married [laughs]?

Ryan: Oh, I thought you were asking me.

Selena: But still, you don't ever forget. Do you ever forget?

Ryan: I mean, I don't think about it all the time. But if I ever wonder why am I married?

Selena: What [laughs]?

Ryan: Pretty quickly I'll remember [both laughing].

Selena: Well, there is more to marriage and your marriage covenant than you might think. And we are going to discuss that a little bit more on the other side.

[00:00:26]

Ryan: Greetings and welcome once again. Ladies and gentlemen, the Fierce Marriage Podcast. My name is Ryan and this is Selena, we're the Fredericks. And if you're on YouTube, you're tuning in to the Fierce Fredericks or the Fierce Family, rather.

We do the Fierce Marriage podcast on Tuesdays, Fierce Parenting on Thursdays. Catch the video or the audio of that. It's an honor to do this work. Thank you for joining us. I have to mention our new patrons.

Selena: All right.

Ryan: And we do have a few new patrons.

Selena: Yaay!

- Ryan:** And those patrons are, I'm going to do a little shout out to Aaron, Ken, Ian, Brooke, and Wesley. Thank you so much for joining the community of-
- Selena:** Fierce patrons.
- Ryan:** We need like a community name. What are you, if you're part of the Fierce Parenting/Marriage community. Fierce Fellows.
- Selena:** [chuckles]Fierce Fellows.
- Ryan:** It got to have alliteration in it. If you have any ideas write those in, fiercemarriage.com/ask. We could use your help. If you want to become a partner, you can do that as well. And we would love to just give any new partners a shout out as we can, as the Lord leads you. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner, and that is a big part of our ministry. We're at 295, as of recording.
- Selena:** Wow.
- Ryan:** We're trying to get to 500 by the end of the year. That'd be incredible.
- Selena:** That'd be awesome.
- Ryan:** You could be counted among them. And just for the small price of a triple decker frangione a month [Selena laughing]. A triple decker frosted frangione [both laughing]. No one knows what that is, but everyone knows what that is.
- Selena:** Some sort of ice blended sugary drink of some sort.
- Ryan:** Yes, I mean, we have some patrons that are just a couple of bucks a month. We have some that are \$100 a month. We have many that are just five or \$10 a month, and I'm just telling you that helps a lot.
- Selena:** A little bit goes along.
- Ryan:** It allows us to have a little bit of certainty in this uncertain world.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Speaking of certainty, covenant, it's the beacon of certainty for not just married people, but for anyone who calls himself a Christian.
- Selena:** Yes.

- Ryan:** Because it is the foundational, relational, framework that God has given us. That He has chosen to relate to us by way of covenant. From the beginning of time, He chose to relate to people by way of covenant.
- Selena:** I'm just opening my bible and seeing some of my notes. I feel like you're waiting till I jump on you.
- Ryan:** Oh, no.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** I was having a grand old time by myself [both laughing] All right, full disclosure, we have Sunny with us. If you're not watching you're listening, you're going to hear some baby sounds. She's having a rough morning, a rough day, and she may or may not voice her concerns. But we're going to continue on, and we're going to soldier on. Selena, you were reading, we're finishing up our reading plan for the year.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Reading through the Bible. In the last week, the home stretch, and you came across Psalm 111 is what you were in and you read verse five, in this particular translation. We like to switch up the translations. We did the CSB translation this year.
- Selena:** Yes, super poetic, really enjoying the translation, and its accuracy, too.
- Ryan:** It's an accurate translation, yes. And you read this verse and I love it. Do you want to read that?
- Selena:** The title is Praise for the Lord's Works. David wrote, "He has provided food for those who fear him. He remembers his covenant forever." The phrase, He remembers His covenant forever" really just struck me while I was reading. Because as you read throughout the Bible, you're seeing the covenantal nature of God.
- You are seeing what happens when people forget who God is, forget His commandments, forget His precepts. Instead of remembering that He, literally, brought them out of the land of Egypt, in Deuteronomy 6. He brought them out of slavery. Out of the house of bondage is what it says.
- Ryan:** I remember you saying, when you brought this up, that it occurred to you that couples need to be reminded to remember their covenant. And it's not a huge leap to make, frankly, because the covenantal framework that we see in

Scripture is God's chosen way of relating to His people throughout all of Redemptive history, all of human history.

Starting in the garden, it was a covenant with Adam and Eve, in the garden. And, then, as the fall ensued, then, a covenant with the people of Israel through Moses, the Mosaic Covenant. And that was after the Abrahamic Covenant, anyway. And, so, if we don't understand God's covenantal nature, we won't understand the covenant of marriage.

Selena: Right, and His faithfulness to us. His faithfulness to His people. That we kept, what is it? We just went through the book of Hosea, at church, and it talked about how we are people that, continually, we're just an adulterous people. We, continually, turn away from God, as sinners.

Ryan: Hosea used some strong language, "They whored themselves out."

Selena: Yes. But, again, whenever it's talking about God and his people, it's always in this framework of covenant, and the promise. And in Deuteronomy, Moses is saying, "Take care, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

In Deuteronomy, that same chapter, before that, he's reminding, he's telling people, "Teach these commandments to your children." And we talk about this a lot on the Fierce Parenting side.

So it's really important for us to understand the depth of covenant. Where it comes from. It's not just a word that Selena and Ryan came up with, obviously. It's biblical framework for understanding the importance and purpose, I think, of our marriage.

Ryan: And I want to make this point, there's a correlation between people who take their marital covenant very lightly. Meaning that, "Hey, we're married, it's going to work.

But, by the way, divorce is always there. It's always an option if it doesn't work out." People who have that attitude toward marriage, I think, there's a correlation between that attitude and a misunderstanding or a lack of understanding of God's covenantal character, and the weight that He places upon covenant.

Mark 10:9, I know you are going to bring this up, at some point. But "What God has brought together, let not man put asunder." God is bringing this covenant together.

A covenant is not something that we just, Selena and I, and any couple that gets married, just decides, arbitrarily, to say, "Yes, let's try this thing. Let's be married, we're going to commit to each other. As long as it works, it's going to be great."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Covenant is something that we're going before God and He is sealing it. We're not sealing it, He's sealing it. And, so, that's a big thing.

Selena: I don't know that we knew this going into marriage. I think we knew we're going to get married and divorce is just never on the table. We just loved each other so much, and God was so gracious in us getting married so young. That we were committed to one another. We loved each other.

God was first in our relationship. So just, by default, a lot of those things just fell into place. God brought us together. I don't have a temptation to look at other people or to wonder what life would be like with them. And, so, I just think over the course of our marriage, we've started to understand why those boundaries are in place.

The depth and the purpose behind when we forget about one another. When we forget about the importance of our wedding day. When we committed to one another before God, and family, and friends, community, and we said we are, exclusively, going to be together and no one else will be within this relationship. That is a weighty commitment and covenant, and it's something we should not forget.

Because marriage gets hard, we know this. Some of those hard moments we usually create on our own because of our own sinful nature. We become too distracted. We have too shallow of a relationship. There's too many distractions, we can scroll through. There's too much comparison and coveting that happens, when no one's looking or we're on our phone.

Ryan: An analogy comes to mind. So I'll just say this covenant is strong enough to get a couple through anything, if you let the covenant be what it was designed to be.

Selena: Yes, Amen.

Ryan: So here's an analogy. You're driving an excavator. It's got the treads, powerful machine, and as you're driving it. You come up to a hill, or you come up to a stump, or you come up to a tree that is in the way. If you don't understand the power of that excavator.

If you don't understand how to use that excavator, you're going to say, "Oh, we're stuck. All right, hop out, let's go around, we're done. Let's hop out of this thing, let's just move on. The excavator is stuck here; the tree is not going anywhere."

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: But if you understand what an excavator can do. You just grab that tree, and you pluck that thing out, and you throw it to the side, and you move through, or you hit a hill, you move up over the hill.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Covenant is strong enough if we understand what it's for, and if we understand and let it be what God designed it to be. You always say that love is; it takes work, love is action. Well, covenant is the arena within which the actions of love do the sanctifying work that they do.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Both the sanctifying work in someone who has to be loved, in the middle of my sin. In the middle of my shortcoming, in the middle of my failure. Whatever those things are and they're various, throughout every marriage, they're different. And as someone who is having to love someone who's imperfect.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So covenant is strong enough to let love play out.

Selena: Mh-hmm.

Ryan: But if we refuse to let covenant be that strong thing. As soon as love gets hard, we're jumping ship.

Selena: Well, and maybe you hear us talking and you're like, "Yes, I agree, covenant is a weighty thing." And, yet, we still forget. We forget the weightiness of it, we forget the purpose of it.

Ryan: Even if you know, at one point.

Selena: How do we forget? I started dabbling into it. We forget our covenant through just allowing ourselves to be too easily distracted by other people, by career, by hobbies. I mean, just even temptation. We're too easily tempted. We're too easily distracted.

We have forgotten the holiness of our marital covenant, and the promise we made to each other, and the fact that God led us together. If our understanding of God and covenant is deep, then, our covenant and commitment towards each other will also be deep and it will also be strong.

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: But if it is shallow, then, we, too, will operate in that shallowness. We will be distracted. We will look at others. We will compare our marriage to someone else's marriage. Temptation, I feel like it's such an option to have divorce on the table. Divorce is like, "Well, when you get married, you also have this option of divorce."

And it's like, "No, you get married, there is no other option. There's no plan B." We burn the ships; this is the plan.

We need to have a right view and understanding of God's love towards us, as well as his covenantal nature. And how do we do that? How do we know that? We read His word. Every day, we read it, we get familiar with it. We know it so well that when the stump comes in our marriage, we're distracted, we're tempted, we are living shallowly. Shallowly - is that a word?

Ryan: Shallowly [both laughing].

Selena: We are not communicating well to each other. We are making irresponsible financial decisions. That's when we can put it up next to God's Word and say, "Okay, wait a second, something's not matching up. I'm not making the right decisions. We are fighting. There's a disconnect. What is happening here within our covenant?"

Ryan: Yes, you have this in the notes, it says, "Our behavior reflects our beliefs." 100%, I believe that. Our beliefs inform our behavior. And here's another analogy, since I'm onto analogies, apparently. If you buy this plane, if someone gives you a plane, and you're into planes, and you want to use the plane to fly.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And you say, "This is a great plane. This thing can traverse the U.S. in 6 hours, and take ten passengers, and it's an incredible.

And then someone says, "Great, let's do it."

You say, "No, I'm good. I don't feel like flying the plane. I don't think it can get us there." That's akin to, I'll just say this, to a prenup, a prenuptial agreement.

Selena: Yes, which we talk about.

Ryan: By the way, we think they're bad, and we think they're a bad idea, and they're antithetical to what we're talking about here. That's the equivalent of saying, "Yes, I bought the plane, but I'm not going to fly the plane. I don't trust the plane. I bought the plane." In other words, "I married this woman and, yes, we're married. It's great. But I need you to sign a prenup just in case it doesn't work out because I don't actually-

Selena: Well, we don't know-

Ryan: I'm not actually sitting in the chair that I bought [Selena laughing].

Selena: Now I'm a chair.

Ryan: Sorry, you know what? We like to mix things up around here.

Selena: Yes, there's this underlying crack in your foundation because there's no trust. There's no trust.

Ryan: You're not a chair.

Selena: I'm not a chair. Thank you [both laughing].

Ryan: You're an airplane, though [chuckling], that's good.

Selena: This idea, too, I just want to look at this idea of forgetfulness, in contrasting remembering. Forgetfulness. In the New Testament, we see forgetfulness as being, and we were talking about this earlier. The Old Testament, God is like, "Do not forget where I've brought you from. Do not forget my teachings." Which is still the same and it is true in the New Testament.

But there's also this forget what is behind. Forget the sinful nature in an active way. Not like, "Whoops, I forgot that I was sinful." It's no, forget that I sin because I've been made new in Christ. So therefore my sin no longer has a hold of me. I'm a new creation. And Matthew 16:9 He says, "Do you not, yet, perceive, do you not remember the five loaves for the 5000, how many baskets did you gather?"

This is Jesus reminding the disciples and the people around Him of who he was and the power... I think of Jesus in the boat, the storm and the boat, and He's asleep.

Ryan: Oh, yes.

Selena: And it's like they forgot who was in the boat. Do you forget who Jesus is and what His purpose is? Again, do we forget our covenant? Do we forget our purpose in that covenant? Not just to have a pal to experience, and enjoy, and just go through this life with but there's a sanctification.

There's a huge, I would say, the entirety of marriage, it's a spiritual thing. It's not one or the other. It's all spiritually foundational because you're being sanctified. You're being made more holy. All of your rough edges are going to be shown. You're going to use them to hurt your spouse whether you mean to or not.

So, again, when that happens, are we just going to be stumped? Are we just going to stop, and not know what to do, and throw our hands up and say, "I'm sick of trying."

Ryan: I want to put some flesh on this because we're talking in general terms here. But what would this look like in real-life marriage? Instead of just saying, "Oh, we're having a hard time." What is the hard time? I mean, an affair is an obvious one.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: If somebody has an affair, is covenant strong enough to get us through that?

Selena: Mh-hmm.

Ryan: That's the most extreme example. Go down another road, that's maybe not as extreme, and you just say your communication has completely tanked.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: You have no connection. You're married to a roommate. You haven't been intimate over a year. He hasn't said he loves you in you can't remember how long.

Selena: You don't know how to kindly to him.

Ryan: You're unhappy. Frankly, that's more often the case, it seems. Couples are coming to us and saying, "I'm just not happy. I deserve to be happy. I deserve a divorce." You see that progression?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Well, you've forgotten what covenant is.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: You've forgotten what you've committed yourself to.

Selena: We committed ourselves to being happy together.

Ryan: And no one wants to hear this when you're in that unhappy place. But someone loving would say to you, "Do you believe that Christ is big enough to do a miracle here?"

"Do you believe that He's wise enough to say that it's better not to get divorced?"

Selena: Mh-hmm.

Ryan: "Do you believe that He's good enough to obey when you can't see the benefits of it." Do you believe those things? That's a really hard mirror for somebody in that situation to look in because you have to answer that question. Now, you can refuse to answer it, but then you'll answer it with your actions.

But if you want to be honest, and you want to look your savior in the face and have an honest conversation with Him and say, "Christ, I think you're good enough, strong enough, powerful enough."

Selena: Yes, I trust and I know that you are.

Ryan: Yes, so that's how the rubber meets the road. Another example, I don't know if you can think of another one. But you've got a spouse who's addicted to pornography, drugs, alcohol, gambling, some life-ruining thing.

Selena: Some sort of addiction.

Ryan: And showing no signs of repentance. Showing no signs of moving away from that.

- Selena:** Also, the unbelieving spouse, and we talked about this. So we have a lady, in church, who has been married to a non-believer. And, I think, they're going on 50 years plus of marriage. But she would tell her young self, "Don't do this. Do not marry a non-believer." And she was warned.
- Ryan:** Well, she said, she goes, "I'm a walking example of what it's like to not listen to wise counsel at a young age. Because I've lived through a lot of really difficult things because of my foolishness as a youth."
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** But she's of the firm and right conviction that she's in a covenantal marriage with this unbelieving husband. And you know what?
- Selena:** The whole church is praying for him, literally.
- Ryan:** The whole church is praying and I'm sure he knows it, too.
- Selena:** And there's already seeds of-
- Ryan:** And he is coming around. After 50 some years, after, no doubt, her agonizing in prayer over him. That's a woman of faith. And you know what? She may never see the fruit of her faith on this side of eternity, but I'm fully confident that she will in glory.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Whatever that outcome is, both, the minimum and the maximum, it will be the glory of Christ. Because she has chosen to glorify Him in it through her obedience.
- Selena:** So good.
- Ryan:** So I just want to bring that full circle. So remembering what covenant is, it's remembering that you have this thing that's strong enough. Your beliefs are going to come out in how you behave in when the rubber meets the road. And, so, we had a time in our marriage, and we said early on, divorce was never really on the table. But we've had hard times, you guys.
- Selena:** But knowing that the door is not even in the vicinity of our conversation for divorce. The door of divorce is just not even anywhere to be found, that was where I felt the most security. We felt the most security of, like, "It's just a hard time and we're just going to have to get through it, and we will, it just stinks right now."

But it doesn't mean that we are giving up on each other. It doesn't mean that we're giving up on our covenant. It doesn't mean that we're giving up on what God has given us. So, I guess, the challenge would be, do you understand covenant?

Do you know God?

Do you understand the purpose of His covenantal nature and therefore your marriage covenant to your spouse?

Do you understand the weight of it, the beauty of it, the goodness, the holiness? If not, go to His word. Go to His word and get that understanding because it really is liberating for your marriage, it's unifying.

Ryan: Well, and get people around you that are going to advocate for your holiness in upholding your covenant. Get a pastor that can counsel you if you're going through a hard time. That's what you have shepherds for. They're there to care for the sheep. That's you, a sheep. That's me, that's us. We need good shepherds and Lord willing, you have a pastor that is there, able and willing to shepherd you.

In that vein, if you don't know Christ, a lot of this will probably sound foreign. But we want you to know Christ.

We want you to understand what it means that He lived and died for you and was resurrected to new life. So that you can be resurrected to new life spiritually and eventually physically. And, so, if you don't know Christ, we encourage you to find a Christian friend to talk to say, "Who is Jesus? Can we read the Bible together?"

Read the Book of John, to start out with. Find a Bible-preaching church that can disciple you. A pastor that can shepherd you. If you don't have the access to those things. You're still wondering, "How do I start?" We have a website, it's this thenewsisgood.com we encourage you to check that out. Should we pray?

Selena: Mh-hmm.

Ryan: Lord, you are good, and God you are powerful. And the covenant that You've given us and the relationship that you've stepped into, voluntarily, with your people, by covenant, Lord, is incredible. So I pray you'd help us, as your people, to understand what that covenantal love looks like and then help us to live out, faithfully, the covenant of marriage that you've placed us in.

I pray for the wife, God, and the husband, who are perhaps struggling with believing that you can move in their marriage. I pray that you would encourage them, that you would increase their faith, Lord, that you might be glorified if no other place in their affections for you. In their faithfulness towards you, and Lord, if you're willing, work a miracle in their marriage, in Jesus name, Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: As a reminder, if our ministry has blessed you, we would be honored to partner with you. To keep things going. Like I said earlier, at the beginning, this is that important for the ministry and we don't want to ask too much, but we have to say something.

So go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. We'd be honored if you would consider that and pray for it, pray about it, check it out. with that said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: And we'll see you again in right around seven days. So until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Psalm 111
 - Deuteronomy 6
 - Mark 10:9
 - Matthew 16:9

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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