

## **PERSEVERANCE, NOT PERFECTION IS THE GOAL**

<https://fiercemarriage.com/perseverance-not-perfection-is-the-goal>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** I think there comes a time in every married couple's life, in fact, there's many instances, many such cases, when you feel like your hope may not be as secure as you thought, or you feel like-

**Selena:** Your spouse isn't quite as perfect as you were hoping for?

**Ryan:** I've never felt that. [Selena laughs]

**Selena:** You're so sweet.

**Ryan:** Because I knew you were never perfect. [both laughs].

**Selena:** There's the smugness.

**Ryan:** So you get discouraged and you start wondering, what am I fighting for? Is it worth it? And if we keep having even the same mistakes or even the same arguments or the same struggles, you start to wonder if there's hope in the middle of that.

So today is an episode to encourage you. If you're in a season of frustration, if you're in a season of where you need perseverance, we're gonna talk about that. Primarily by reminding you that perseverance doesn't equal perfection, and trying to make it equal perfection will most often lead to a loss of hope.

So we're here to inject your marriage with some hope. Thank you for joining us. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:05] <Music>

**Ryan:** Selena, Selena, I am feeling I'm overwhelmed and bedraggled. I thank you, Selena, for writing today's rundown, gathering together these genius thoughts that we're gonna go through. [Selena chuckles] But I'm excited. Life is full. It is good and-

**Selena:** Loud.

**Ryan:** You Know what?

**Selena:** I tried to give her a quiet toy. [both laughs].

- Ryan:** Anything's loud enough.
- Selena:** It really is. It really is.
- Ryan:** You folks, our listeners, our viewers, one of the main reasons I'm a little bit overwhelmed is because you've been buying our books so quickly. [both chuckles] So fast.
- Selena:** No. We had one big order from Missionary Alliance, which is so cool.
- Ryan:** No, North American Missions Board.
- Selena:** Board. Okay. Which is really an awesome problem to have, right?
- Ryan:** Praise God. Praise God.
- Selena:** Because they bought like-
- Ryan:** Over 1,500 pastors and their wives will be going through our latest Speaks books.
- Selena:** So great.
- Ryan:** Well, what they're doing with the holidays coming up is create some extra strain around-
- Selena:** Just tiny.
- Ryan:** I needed to order books. Paper supply chains are a real thing and they're not as quick as they once were, especially when you need to order the quantities that we're ordering. So anyway, God is good in that.
- If you don't know who we are, my name's Ryan. This is my lovely wife Selena.
- Selena:** We mentioned all that because we are grateful to our patrons who continue to support us through this ministry. And if you wanna be a part of that, join the Fierce Fellowship. I don't know. We're trying out names.
- Ryan:** It's Fierce Family.
- Selena:** Family. The Fierce Family.
- Ryan:** It's the Fierce family. That's what it is.

**Selena:** Okay. I'm sorry. I missed it. The Fierce Family.

**Ryan:** You know what?

**Selena:** See, we write communication books.

**Ryan:** You know what? You need to show up one day and [both laughs] do your job. I'm kidding.

**Selena:** I know. The hardest-

**Ryan:** Oh, is that my fault?

**Selena:** Sunny didn't like that.

**Ryan:** She doesn't like loud noises.

**Selena:** So if you wanna join the Fierce Families, go to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner). We'd love to have you. We've got a bunch of new patrons that we're gonna mention in the next episode. We're just grateful for your guys' commitment, weathering the storms through all the trials and various things, and the fruitful setbacks, problems, whatever we have. God is good and faithful.

**Ryan:** He's good.

**Selena:** He's working through it.

**Ryan:** So speaking of fruitful problems, as of the time this will go out, we will be about four weeks out from the Fierce Families Conference. The first-ever-

**Selena:** Oh, man.

**Ryan:** #DomesticCon. Fierce Families Conference. [Selena laughs].

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** That's gonna catch on.

**Selena:** That's gonna catch.

**Ryan:** Domestic con.

**Selena:** They need stickers.

**Ryan:** It's gonna be great. We're talking about biblical manhood, biblical womanhood. We're talking about marriage. We're talking about family. We're covering a ton of ground. If you're in the Puget Sound area, namely around Tacoma, encourage you to make it out. Space is limited. Go to [fiercefamilies.com](http://fiercefamilies.com) to find more.

I'm really excited to see our friends John and Becca when they come. So Warrior Poet Society, if you know who those guys are. He's an army ranger, gun guy, loves Jesus. Amazing friend. Known him for 20 years. They're coming out. They're gonna spend a few days. Love it.

**Selena:** Gonna be great.

**Ryan:** All right.

**Selena:** So we are gonna jump into this topic four weeks out. I'm not ready for it. I'm ready for it, but I'm not ready for it.

**Ryan:** It'll so good.

**Selena:** It's gonna be good.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Anyways, today we're talking about, I mean, you mentioned it, that perseverance doesn't equal perfection. This conversation comes from one of our oldies, but our goodies-

**Ryan:** Two as One.

**Selena:** Two as One. It's a 30-day devotional to go through with your spouse. We go through scripture, we have a little devotional, and then there's a couple of questions, and then prayers, a space for you guys to pray for one another at the end of each day. And the one we chose today was... I just go back to it and I'm like, Man, these are just... who wrote these. [laughs] I was humbly surprised at how faithful they continue to just point us back to the truth, point us back to Christ.

**Ryan:** Sometimes I'll go back and read that and I'm like, "Hope I didn't say anything that I've like-

**Selena:** Because we've grown in our theology and we've grown in our knowledge of scripture and our understanding of God. And so-

**Ryan:** And our convictions have sharpened in, I think, really good ways because of the cultural issues we're facing. Anyway, you were pleasantly surprised that it's stood the test of time.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** Okay.

**Selena:** Praise God.

**Ryan:** Woo.

**Selena:** Jumping into this, the chapter is called Perseverance Does Not Equal Perfection. If you take a moment and think back to when you guys made your vows, right, probably something... we wrote our own, but it also had like "to have to hold. Until death do us part, yada, yada." Committing, you know, vows are promises, that we're gonna go through hardship together, we're gonna enjoy the good times. We're committed to being together no matter what, right? Till death do us part.

These promises are meant to serve... You know, we're committing to serve one another, to love each other, and put each other before ourselves. Like, I'm gonna look out for you. Before I look out for myself in a lot of ways, I wanna serve you and love you. And I know that you wanna do the same, right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** But our vows are not saying, I promise to be Mrs. Perfect all the time. [Ryan laughs].

[Dumb and Dumber clip] Sorry, Mr. Perfect. I guess you never make any mistakes1 [both laughs].

It's not helpful for us.

**Selena:** So our vows, yeah, they're not to promise one another that we're gonna be perfect through our whole marriage. Like, we promise to love one another. And I think sometimes there's just this connotation of, you know, with the beauty of the day and the wedding, like, Oh, we're just gonna... I mean, no one enters marriage thinking it's gonna be problem-free and perfect. But I think we have high hopes for it when we're-

**Ryan:** Well, I think there's a lot of ignorance is bliss there and you don't realize just the extent to which you're capable of being sinners.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** Now, of course, the goal is not to go into a marriage saying, yeah, we're gonna mess up. So just, you know, laissez-faire, like 'whatever happens, whatever will be will be' type of thing. No, we obviously are striving to love within the covenant. But there's always this asterisk that says 'already, but not yet.' We are saved yet being sanctified.

So I think that's what we're trying to emphasize here today, is that, listen, sanctification is a hard thing. It's a burning process. You know, refining fires are hot.

**Selena:** Oh, yes.

**Ryan:** And they only work if they're hot. So marriage has the effect of becoming a crucible for a husband's soul, for a wife's soul. If you're not ready for a crucible, it will be very unpleasant for you. So what we're trying to say is whether you're married, you know, for 30 days or 30 years, don't despair in those moments when-

**Selena:** Of imperfection.

**Ryan:** ...when your imperfection is on display. Instead realize that the Lord disciplines the son, the daughter in whom He delights. So there's joy to be had in the perseverance.

**Selena:** Right. Right. Again, there's only one person that is perfect. There was only one man who ever walked the face the earth that was perfect. And that is our lord's savior Jesus Christ. Right? He's without sin. He was a perfect Son of God, the only One. And He's the only promise of perfection. It's only He could fulfill it.

We have to understand that, as Christians, we are covered by the blood of Jesus. His perfection covers us. So when God sees us we are covered by the blood of Christ.

**Ryan:** Praise God.

**Selena:** And that is a gift.

**Ryan:** God Made Him who had no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of Christ.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** When God sees us, and we are in Christ... Look at Paul, all of Paul's letters. If you would've been with Paul in first century AD and you said, "Paul, what are you?" He wouldn't have said, I'm a Christian.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** He wouldn't have said, you know, I'm a Jew. He wouldn't have said, I'm a Roman citizen. He would've said, I'm a man in Christ. In Christ is by far the most-

**Selena:** Potent way to say it.

**Ryan:** ...prevalent way that he presented himself in terms of his identity in Christ. Well, what does it mean to be in Christ? Is that you are surrounded by Him, covered by His blood. You've been imputed His righteousness. He has taken your sin. So, yeah, that's what it means when we stand before God and He doesn't see our sin nature.

Now in marriage, we very much see each other's sin.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Now, I don't mean God's blind to our sin nature.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** In terms of our salvation, that was bought and paid for, and that debt's been expunged. This little one is very active. Hello.

**Selena:** She wants to grab the mic, of course.

**Ryan:** She grabs everything. So I went a little bit on a rabbit trail there. But I think it's edifying, it's helpful because it's important to remember how God sees us because that helps us see each other in more of the way He sees us, which is accurately But as someone created in His image, who has fallen and is in need of salvation, a) and sanctification, b).

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So that kind of calibrates you to say, "Okay, I am a sinner in need of grace, you are a sinner in need of grace. We are gonna work through whatever this is." And that's the beauty of covenantal love.

**Selena:** Right. It's not me just saying, Oh, well, you're perfect now in Jesus, so I just overlook everything that you've done, and we just kind of try to live happily and pursue whatever makes the peace happen and keeps the peace. It's not that at all. It's the right understanding the knowledge of who we are in Christ because of Christ and then who we are to one another. You know, because knowing Christ, knowing who we are in Him, and because of Him it levels the playing field in our marriage. Because we're two imperfect people coming together.

When we understand that His perfection is a gift, what can our response only be but that of gratitude and humility?

**Ryan:** So we've laid it out. We've described, you know, how God sees us in Christ. Now, what does that actually mean practically for marriage? So we'll just talk about some of our marriage. We've been married 20 years now. We can finally say that two decades. It's not an awkward number anymore.

**Selena:** I'm married 20 years.

**Ryan:** It's just a round number. And I've loved you the entire time. I've enjoyed our marriage. It's been awesome. There's been times though that it's been difficult-

**Selena:** Not perfect? [both chuckles]

**Ryan:** And one case comes to mind. And you can be thinking of another one while I'm sharing this one.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** ...is we were in prayer time at church, we were taking communion as the church that we were attending at the time. We did that every week. And we would listen to a song, a worship song, we'd sing it, and we'd reflect and we'd grab the elements and we'd go back to the back of the church, we'd stand and pray.

The message... I can't remember what it was, but I had just recently watched a message talking about the idea that if you're not fully known you'll never experience full love. Meaning that if I told Selena, You can know 99% of me, and I promise to let that 99% just out, you can always see it and you can know



that part of me, but there's 1% of me that I feel like is off limits to you for whatever reason.

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** I'm ashamed of it or I think it's not for you. Whatever that thing is. Like sometimes guys will have hard things they go through at work and they don't wanna share it with their wife because they don't want their wife to have to carry that burden. Well, guys, your wife's a helper. She's designed to help you carry them.

But the point is, if I keep that 1% back, I'll Always somewhere deep in my guts wonder, If Selena knew this, would she still love me? So I can know you love me too and 92%-

**Selena:** It's always a chip at the trust. Chipping away of it.

**Ryan:** Well, it's always gonna be a doubt in my mind. So I felt that conviction happened during communion. Like, oh, there's something. And it was because I had remembered something in my past a long time ago in childhood. So before we married, obviously. And I thought, you know, It's one of these things, if I just stop thinking about it, I'll probably forget and I can go away. I don't have to worry about it. Well, it never went away.

I think a week or so went by. I don't remember because this happened, I think over a period of time. And it was another church service. We were coming home. Maybe this was the straw that broke the camel's back was this communion.

**Selena:** Yeah, I think it was.

**Ryan:** So we're on our way home from church. That's what it was, is I had been wrestling with this all week, and I felt God pressed on me, "You just need to talk to your wife about this." So I thought, "Oh." You know, I have that sense of it's that knots, your stomach's in knots, but you know that it's a good thing.

Anyway, we get going. We were driving. We had two daughters at the time. They had both fallen asleep in the car by God's grace. This one I wish would fall asleep right now by God's grace. She's being very vocal. And we're in the car and I say, "Selena, I gotta tell you something," and I spilled kind of my guts.

I remember what you said. You said three things. You said, "Thank you for sharing with me. I thank You for being known." You said, "I still love you." And then you said, "I need to share some stuff with you."

So it wasn't my worst nightmare. It wasn't this like, Oh, that one percent, Selena will not love me or it'll take all this time.

**Selena:** You kind of persevered through some of those feelings and fears in order to be known. And God is faithful. I mean, He wants us to be honest with each other. He wants us to be transparent. I mean, we wrote a whole book on it. [Chuckles] Because we need to be fully known in order to be fully loved.

**Ryan:** So I think those moments are not moments to-

**Selena:** Performative.

**Ryan:** You know, they're not moments when you despair because of your lack of perfection so you rejoice because you're persevering in the middle of a trial.

**Selena:** That's so good.

**Ryan:** So if you can do that together as a couple, that will give you far more fortitude, far more resilience. Frankly, far more joy, if you can say, look, trial... whether it's something where you're having to deal with something between you-

**Selena:** Or that you're dealing externally.

**Ryan:** Or you're dealing together with something externally. If you can look at that and say, this is a cause for joy because the promise of Christ is so strong and even promises through this. So since we're a marriage podcast, I think most often that looks like you've wronged me in some way, I've wronged you in some way. We've grown distant in some way. We've forgotten to regard one another. Go to last week's episode, we talked about having a high regard.

So yeah, that's one way that worked out in our marriage. I think other ways were, gosh, communication. Like many years went by where I felt like... in hindsight realized just how emotionally stunted I was. Meaning that I wasn't able to mind the depths of my own heart and then shine the light of God's word into that deep spot and understand what... I couldn't pick that stuff apart and therefore I couldn't talk to you about it. And it created a lot of communication problems, which I would classify as trial, which would fall under needing to persevere in the middle of that trial.

**Selena:** James 1. Everybody knows it. Count all join my brothers when you face trials of many kinds, for you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and steadfastness, also known as perseverance... Let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We can lack nothing because of the blood of Christ. We lack when we try to rely on our own selves and our own abilities in a wrong understanding of thinking that we can actually achieve what we want aside from Christ. So-

**Ryan:** I think there's a posture... Maybe go back to that passage because there's a posture to this verse 5 in James 1. It says, "If any you lack wisdom..." What does it tell you to do? He doesn't say, "Get a good book, read the book, learn the material." He doesn't say-

**Selena:** So convicting [laughs] to me.

**Ryan:** He doesn't say, Try harder. Do memory drills. It doesn't say, you know, think logically, think more clearly. I'm listing things because I'm trying to make the point. He says, "Ask God."

**Selena:** "Let him ask God." It's great.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** So there's an orientation of the heart that goes into what we're talking about, where you are either seeing this as a need for perfection or a need for perseverance. Meaning that if I have a humble disposition toward God, I'm realizing that perfection is not something that I can-

**Selena:** You've resigned yourself to that.

**Ryan:** Yeah. But the prideful man, looking in God's face, would say, Oh yeah, I got this. I don't need to ask God for wisdom. I can find it on my own." It's James also who says, every good and perfect gift comes from above, the Father of Lights. It's not something that... it has to come from Him.

**Selena:** It does. I mean, if you keep reading the verse, it says, "Let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach and it'll be given him."

**Ryan:** Right. So we have a God who is the source of wisdom, and He's a generous God who is there to help us with the wisdom, to give it to us. That's the encouragement for you today. In the middle of your trial, let your heart be oriented in the way that James is indicating here—humbling ourselves before God, going to God for wisdom. Seeing that trial as an occasion for perseverance, not striving. And then do that arm-in-arm with your spouse.

**Selena:** Right. Amen.

**Ryan:** Because that's when you can look at your marriage accurately and you can actually begin to make forward progress.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** So this could apply a thousand different ways. It's a fairly quick episode because frankly, it's a fairly straightforward encouragement. You're not perfect. Everyone knows it now. You need to know it. You need to acknowledge it and go to God and ask Him for help. Instead of trying to fight your way through it alone, fight together.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** If you don't know who God is, we want you to know who God is. We want you to know Jesus, who is God's Son, who came and died for your sins that you might be saved. We want you to know Him.

The way we recommend you find out who Jesus is, is you talk to a friend who's a Christian, ask them to read the Bible with you, or ask them to go to church with you. Find a church that preaches out of the Bible.

If you don't have either of those things or you can't, you don't have a friend that you can talk to, this website might help. It's [thenewsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com). We hope that that leads you in the right direction.

Let's pray. Father God, thank You that You are our Father of lights, You are perfect, every good and perfect thing comes from You. God, we ask You to give us wisdom. In the middle of our imperfection, in the middle of our need for perseverance, help us to see it, help us to step into it, help us to do so, understanding that it is an occasion for joy and rejoicing. May these couples do that in agreement with one another. More so in agreement with You. In your precious name, amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** Thank you for joining us. Fairly quick episode, but it's okay. The baby's a little tough these days. So we're gonna cut it off there. But thank you. If you want to partner with us, go to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](http://fiercemarriage.com/partner). That said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** We'll see you again in seven days. Until next time—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **Referenced Resources**
  - [thenewsisgood.com](https://thenewsisgood.com)
  - [Two as One](#), Ryan & Selena Frederick

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