

WHAT IF MY SPOUSE LET'S THEMSELF GO? IS IT SHALLOW TO CARE ABOUT HOW MY SPOUSE LOOKS?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/what-if-my-spouse-lets-themself-go-is-it-shallow-to-care-about-how-my-spouse-looks>

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Ryan: All right, if you're easily offended, this may not be the episode for you. Not that we intend to offend, but sometimes topics like these can be a bit like kicking a hornet's nest.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: So certainly we're not trying to do that. But here we go. So we're asking the question, what if your spouse has let themselves go? What does that mean? Well, have they stopped caring about their physical appearance? Have they stopped caring about their health? Maybe you married a strapping young man.

Selena: And he's no longer strapping.

Ryan: And some of the stuff, you know, as you age, you're going to change physically.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: But there are, I think, factors that the Lord has given into our care. And if we stop caring for those things, we can't expect good things to happen. But what are the questions to be asked around that?

Selena: Is it a sin to let yourself go? Is it a sin to not care about what you look like?

Ryan: If you're curious about that and you want to know our perspective and perhaps even what God's word might say about that topic and as it pertains to your marriage, then you're in the right place and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:08] <music>

Ryan: Hello and welcome, friends. I'm Ryan, this is my lovely wife, Selena. We are the Fredericks. This is the Fierce Marriage podcast. Thank you for joining us. If you're parents, check out the Fierce Parenting podcast. That should prove instructive. We hope so.

Anyway, speaking of parenting, if you can't see us, if you're listening, we do have Sunny with us today. So please bear with us if there's extra noise. We love having our baby with us. So here we are.

If you want to become a patron, what that means is you're joining the Fierce Fellowship is what we're calling it, which I love it. I love that.

Selena: It's good.

Ryan: Just go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. That is a large part by which God provides through you for our family. It's a big task to do these episodes, to get them out to you every week, to do the online stuff, to write, to minister. So we have chosen the biblical model for our sustenance in that we're not... you won't see advertisements here, maybe with a rare exception. If we really believe in the thing or if they're offering us like a million dollars, yeah, we'll probably advertise.

Selena: Maybe. It depends on what it is. [laughs]

Ryan: So far, that hasn't happened. We're holding out. I don't want to brag, but you know, in terms of YouTube revenue, you know, YouTube advertises and-

Selena: We got like \$10.

Ryan: We were up to like \$89 a month. So that's roughly \$22 per episode-

Selena: That is some groceries for this Frederick family, though, you know?

Ryan: It is.

Selena: So that adds to the-

Ryan: So if you're just joining this conversation, you haven't watched or listened to last week's episode or I'll say the last episode... I think we might end up missing a week because I'm in the middle of finals and papers and all that kind of stuff. I'm in seminary if you're not aware. But if you're just jumping in, we asked the question last week on behalf of a listener, what if I'm no longer attracted to my wife?

So we talked about a spouse's orientation toward his or her husband or wife, wife or husband, in terms of how they set their spouse up as their standard of attraction. And-

- Selena:** How do they deal with the temptation when they're not feeling attracted to their spouse? How do they deal with the temptation of others around them that seem more attractive?
- Ryan:** Or like the guy who wrote in last week said he's not feeling... we actually mischaracterized it cause it wasn't totally clear. He emailed us. I didn't tell you this, but he clarified and said he's actually attracted to his wife, he's just not only attracted to her and he wants to get rid of all other attractions and be only attracted to his wife.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** It's not that he's not attracted to his wife. It's just he has... So it's-
- Selena:** I mean, it's a good question either way because I think people have... it's a struggle that everyone, most people, a lot of people can deal with.
- Ryan:** Hopefully something in there helped the brother who wrote in. So this is the other side to that, meaning that there is... in a relationship you're one of two sides. You're either going to be the attractor, the attractive person, or you're going to be the attracted person, meaning that I'm playing both sides at all times and you're playing both sides at all times. You're both being wildly attracted to me.
- Selena:** Wildly.
- Ryan:** Wildly. But at any moment you're playing both roles. So we've talked about being the attracted person and the agency that we can exercise faithfully as believers to make sure that we're honing our standard of attraction in on our spouse.
- Selena:** Yes. Yes.
- Ryan:** So this is the other side of it, meaning that you're looking now at your spouse saying, should your spouse be attractive? Should you be attractive to your spouse? That's a big question.
- Selena:** It's a big question because, I mean, just in your head, listener or viewer, you're probably already thinking, you already have assumptions, you already have thoughts like we did, right? Well, of course, like, yeah, you should never let yourself go. Or of course, you should be attracted to your spouse all the time. Of course, like, yes, you know? And I'm not saying that those aren't always... I think they're driven by, I want to say godly motivation, but in the humblest sense, you know?

Ryan: Mm-Hmm.

Selena: I want to please my husband on every level. Right? I wanna be a faithful wife. I wanna be a godly wife. I wanna be a fruitful wife. I wanna be one that, you know, is willing and happy and joyful, you know, jump into bed and have some fun married time. But I also wanna be the wife that he can come to for help, you know, and the wife that he can feel safe with and all of that.

So those desires don't come from nowhere. Right? If from in scripture, if I'm living under authority, those desires and the seeds and the fruit that's being produced is from the Holy Spirit, it's from the scriptures being in our life on a regular basis.

Ryan: And I would say the same is true for a husband who I think is seeking his... so the question is, what if your spouse stops caring? Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Because I'll say the normative model is what you just described, that you are striving, in a healthy way, to be the ideal wife. And in the same way as a husband, I'm striving to be the ideal husband.

Selena: Well, why?

Ryan: Winning and failing.

Selena: And why are we striving? Right? That's-

Ryan: It's all gonna come down to the gospel. It's gonna be our drive behind this. Like, I want to lead you well because that's the call that Christ has placed on my life as a Husband.

Selena: It really is an obedience thing. I mean-

Ryan: I want to love you well for the same reason. But I also want to be the kind of man that you can be proud of. I wanna be the kind of man that you can look up to and respect. I wanna be the kind of man that once in a while impresses you with my, you know, physical feats. Right?

Selena: Strappiness?

Ryan: Yeah. That's the ideal. So the question I think we're trying to address here is, what if your spouse doesn't care about those things? What if they don't-

Selena: Or they stopped caring. At one point they did care about and now they've stopped caring and you have maybe voiced some of your concerns but it's just met with apathy or indifference.

Ryan: Or they diluted themselves into thinking it's not really a problem.

Selena: Yeah. Because we can hide behind all kinds of Scripture and thoughts and-

Ryan: We're gonna read some questions that were written in by wives about their husbands. Of course, this goes both ways. It happens that women, wives are more likely to write in and ask questions. We get a good bit of men writing in as well. But this was a theme. So we're gonna address it. But yeah, one of the things is at one point you were, you know... the husbands have changed and the wife wants to find him attractive and I think a husband wants to find their wife attractive.

Selena: It's kind of a different battle. Like when the wife doesn't find the husband attractive, it puts off a different persona, right? It's not necessarily looked down upon. But like when a husband wants his wife to be attractive, there's a whole nother message that it feels like it's sending out.

Ryan: Oh, yeah.

Selena: Of like, you know. And so-

Ryan: Let's hopefully get rid of all that.

Selena: We're treading carefully, but we are aiming at being godly husbands and wives. This is what they do. This is how they dress. This is what we, you know... go ahead.

Ryan: So let's read these questions, and then let's get into scripture and see what it has to say. So Selena, why don't you read this first question? Both of these are from Anon, by the way. Go ahead.

Selena: My good friend. "My husband has gained a lot of weight since we first met, and we've gotten older. He's lost a lot of his hair, and the weight has changed his facial structure. I can manage my attraction to him when he keeps a full beard that hides the weight gain, but when he fully shaves, I feel very unattracted to him. I've had conversations about this with him, but every time he shaves it makes intimacy very difficult because he looks like a different person. Am I just being shallow?"

- Ryan:** That's at the heart of this question when you ask it, right?
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Whether your husband or a wife, you find yourself thinking, "Wow, they've kind of let themselves go. What am I to say right about this?" By the way, on the beard thing, I've heard it said that beards are the pushup bra for men. [both laughs] You gotta keep it on. By the way, I did shave it. It was a little outta hand.
- Selena:** It was a little outta hand. Yeah.
- Ryan:** Well, I'm gonna grow it back, though. I didn't shave it all the way off if you're wondering.
- Selena:** Your husband's body is not his own. [both laughs] I'm just kidding. It's like the wife's body is not Her own.
- Ryan:** Let's talk about 1 Corinthians 7. So it brings up good questions here. So we're gonna read the next question, and then we'll kind of talk about some themes that are in here, and then hopefully get in the scripture and find some truth. So, let's read the second question.
- Selena:** Question number two. "I have not been attracted to my husband for two years. I've been trying to work through it, and he is aware. I'm not attracted to him anymore for very shallow and petty reasons. He's gained weight, does not take care of himself, will not trim his beard or cut his hair. He looks like a totally different person and I can't stand to look at him. I'm hurt because he knows how I feel and does not care. I feel terrible and shallow. I know that marriage is much more than the physical attraction, but I've been fighting the thoughts and feelings for two years, and I'm so defeated that I just sit on the floor and sob. Truthfully my husband is a totally different person. He's not the driven, hardworking, patient man that I married five years ago, and his new look clearly shows that to me. I'm just in a very dark place and I cry after we have sex because I really can't stand to look at him because it makes me so mad that he won't take care of himself. I've always tried to maintain a healthy lifestyle and be active so that my husband would be attracted to me, but he does not show the same regard. This very petty, shallow problem has driven me to a very dark place in my marriage where I'm avoiding my spouse. I don't want him to touch me and I feel absolutely terrible and stick over it. I have a few other friends who are dealing with the same kind of problem."
- Ryan:** So, what strikes me with both of these, again, I'm talking about some themes here, is that you feel petty, you feel shallow. But at the root of it is not... I don't

like the fact that you have a belly now, or that the fact... It's the fact that you don't care.

Selena: That is true.

Ryan: It's the fact that you stopped caring. And because you stopped caring about this aspect of yourself, I feel like you've stopped caring about me. Does that make sense?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: I think a husband would maybe say the same thing. Now, typically, you know, if I'm painting with broad strokes, you know, and as the cliché goes, there is some truth to it. Men care about visual things. They're more visually driven than women. Women tend to be more emotionally driven and connection-driven. So would a husband say the exact same thing? I think yes. I think a husband would. We've had conversations like this in our own marriage, you know, at different seasons of our life-

Selena: I think for us when we've gone through seasons of, you know, weight fluctuation or, you know, feeling a little more let go than put together, for me, the default has always been like, no matter what, I know that you care about me, that you care about yourself. And that I think I have this hope that this is not permanent, right? And no, I'm not talking like eternal things. I'm just talking about the here and now. Like, okay, this is a season we're going through, you know, I've gained weight for whatever reason, maybe it's postpartum, or maybe, you know, we've had a lot going on, it's been hard to take care of my body in certain areas.

But the default, like where we fall at the lowest level is still so rich and full of hope and full of charity and generosity. I know that you care about me even in these moments of fluctuation. And how do I know that you care about me? You know, you ask me questions. Even when I'm mad about the thing, you gently prod. But it's not from a place of policing, it's not from a place of pride. It's from a place of I care about you, I want you to be healthy for our children in the future, for grandchildren. We're trying to bank into the future, you know, God willing.

And I care about the orientation of your heart. Are you stewarding it for the mission that Christ has given you, you know? So no matter kind of the ups and downs of weight and... we're dealing with matters of the heart. We're dealing with matters of the heart. The weight is just, I think, a sign pointing inward of what's really happening.

Ryan: Well, there's other things like diet, right? Because you have lots of guys who are skinny fat, where you may not be putting on weight because you have metabolism that keeps that from happening, but you are very unhealthy, and that maybe you can't see it happening, but it's happening internally.

Or you've picked up a habit like smoking, or you're drinking heavily or you're, you know, whatever the habit is that's causing your health to go south. I think there's two ways to divide this up. Okay? So there's the things that are outside of our control and things that are inside our control, right? As you age, your appearance is going to change.

Selena: There are things that you can't help.

Ryan: Things you can't help. You know, your hair might fall out.

Selena: And get those wrinkles.

Ryan: You'll get some wrinkles. What? You'll get some wrinkles. You'll get-

Selena: You'll lose some teeth eventually. [both laughs]

Ryan: I hadn't thought about that one.

Selena: What else do you think? You might lose your eyesight. So maybe that's good for... [laughs]

Ryan: So you gotta get some glasses, which, you know, I think glasses could go either way. Could make you look better or worse.

Selena: Stop.

Ryan: And of course, as you get older, your metabolism slows, and so it's natural in some sense that you're gonna gain weight. Or maybe your posture suffers and you just atrophy. The point is, is some of that's out of our control, right? Then there's the part of it that's in our control. So within that side of the conversation, there's another way to divide it. You can say on one end, you shouldn't care about anything physical, and because you're asking this question you're therefore a shallow person.

Selena: Right. because God cares about the heart, right?

Ryan: Yeah. Right. Because you should only care about the relationship that we have and you shouldn't be asking me that. You're a terrible person for asking me about my physical health. Okay? That's one end of the spectrum.

Then there's the other end of the spectrum where you are obsessing about it. Where you are so obsessed with being attractive that now you're spending two hours at the gym because your metabolism has slowed down, you are not eating enough healthy food to sustain, you know, or you are obsessing about your spouse's appearance, and you know, the fact that your wife gained three pounds postpartum, that now she needs to get to the gym and work that off.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Right. So there's both ends of that. The ruts on the sides of the same road. In the middle, there's a balance in that I love you the way you are. I understand that we're gonna grow together but I also... We want to have optimal health because what is the purpose of this body that God's given us? He didn't just give us a soul. We are embodied people.

Selena: Romans 12, yes.

Ryan: We have a body. We have a flesh.

Selena: We have a temple.

Ryan: We have a temple. And what is the purpose of this body, this temple? To glorify God. It's for the mission of Christ. It's to go... Like, you can't go and preach the gospel to all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that he commanded. You can't do any of that without a body. You can't go without a body.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Not only that, but when we are resurrected in the new heavens, new earth, it's a bodily resurrection. Our savior was bodily resurrected. He reigns now at the right hand of the father in the body. To say this stuff doesn't matter is a gross mischaracterization and a misunderstanding of how God views the body.

Selena: But to say that it's the only thing that matters is the same thing. Right?

Ryan: Absolutely. And to obsess over it is just any sort of idolatry and vanity.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: You go to Song of Solomon... excuse me. Go to Ecclesiastes. The Song of Solomon's all about attraction. But go to Ecclesiastes, and you'll see there is... At some point, you have to resign yourself to the fact that this is immortal

flesh still. It's not yet been made new. It's not yet immortal. So for me to act like you and me should never change and to obsess over it is me telling God that the way that He's created us to-

Selena: His boundaries.

Ryan: That his boundaries are no good. That, God, I should be immoral. I should have some level of immortality in me. And where's the humility in that? That is very prideful.

Selena: Well, God took away the tree of... He took away the garden so that that couldn't exist. And so there's... sorry.

Ryan: No, go ahead. The other thing I wanted to bring up, because people are probably asking is this, well, what if I have some sort of physiological limitation that means that I am going to gain weight? There's the common... you know, I have a thyroid problem, therefore I'm going to gain weight. But gaining weight in itself is not a sin. But, you know what is a sin: gluttony. Gluttony is a straight-up, run-of-the-mill sin.

Selena: Right. It's excess.

Ryan: Meaning that if you don't know how to manage the amount of caloric intake... You know what else is a sin? Laziness. So, you know what, most people gain weight because they are lazy gluttons. Meaning we're taking in a lot of really rich food and we're not having any output that justifies that level of food.

Selena: And it's filling.

Ryan: And it's an indulgence.

Selena: It could be some filling some other right heart issue. You know, it could be forgetting that the reason why we have food as fuel, right, it's not... And then there's also reasons... there's feasts to celebrate. But you can't feast all the time. Then it becomes not a feast.

Ryan: Like enjoy the good food and steep yourself in the goodness of God in that food. But there's a point where that-

Selena: Not every day.

Ryan: ...where you turn that corner where you're like, "I'm not in glorifying God in this. I'm now sinning in this."

Selena: Yeah, it's an indulgence.

Ryan: I brought this conversation up to a friend, and I won't mention him by name because I don't want him to get hate mail but I thought this was a... He was wrestling with our previous conversation. And he goes, well, but what about, you know, you... I get that you have a thyroid problem, but don't tell me you have a thyroid problem while having two buckets of fried chicken under your arm.

And that's what I'm trying to get at is there is stuff that's in our control and the stuff that's not in our control, and we are called a steward of the stuff in our control. And stuff that's not in our control we are called to give that over to God and trust Him with it.

Selena: Let's get back to scripture about... what does scripture say about our physical bodies? What does it scripture say about us also as a body and a soul? We're human beings made in the image of God. Imago Dei. We reflect God's glory in our appearance, in my brown hair, in your brownish dark hair, in your... However the Lord has made you, the pieces He's given you, those are pieces to represent Him, to glorify Him. We are also-

Ryan: That's profound. Think about the fact that God has given you... I don't think we get down into the depths of just what it means that God created you the way He did for His purposes.

Selena: Right. If He didn't care-

Ryan: And you mentioned like eye color-

Selena: I was reading on some research and it was like, well, if God didn't care about what we looked like, He would've made us all look the same. He could have, you know?

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: And I was like, He could have. [laughs] Is that the only reason? No, I don't know. I think that He is a creative being, obviously. Right? The Bible shows us this in Genesis 1.

Being made in His image is one way that we can glorify and honor Him when we take care of our bodies and understanding, you know... you go to Romans 12, and our bodies are temples. Our bodies are given to us for the glorification of Christ, the glorification of the gospel.

The Christian life is one of self-denial, right? And when we look at the Christian life, it is self-denial. If we love God, then we obey Him. Christ Jesus said, if you love Me you'll feed my sheep. If you love me, you'll do what I ask. Right? But that is not just motivated always out of duty. Sometimes it is. But it's also motivated by the joy of being loved by Christ, being saved as a sinner, being known and still saved, still loved. The foundation of our self-image, of our marriage, it cannot be based on our looks. Although our appearance is important, it is a piece of us, it is not the whole piece of us.

So to move pieces, to manipulate the order, to move the boundaries that God has put in place is to live in sin. And so, what does the Bible say? 1 Peter 3, Peter tells wives that their beauty should not come from outward adornments, such as braided hair and wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes, instead, it should be that one of inner self, unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful." So we see that.

We see in Romans 12 opens with talking about how we are living sacrifices. He appeals to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. That by testing you may discern what's the will of God, good and acceptable and perfect will.

He talks about the gifts of grace. He talks about the marks of a true Christian. It's not the person who's dressed the best has the best, you know, BMI and you know, is healthy and doing all the things. But the first things are first. Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. But the Bible also says in 1 Timothy 4:8-

Ryan: I wanted to bring this up because I think this is a beautiful... this is where we're getting these thoughts from is the fact that there is value in your body, but it's not supreme value. I'm not saved externally. I'm just reading a bunch on Martin Luther right now for what I'm writing. And he makes it a very clear distinction between the internal and the external. Like salvation is an internal... It's faith. It's an internal reality that then bears external fruit. He's not talking about body and soul, but there is our tendency to not think in those categories. So 1 Timothy 4:8 says this. "For while bodily training is of some value..."

Selena: Some value.

Ryan: So often we just gloss over that because that's the process to the hypothesis, which is the if then, or this, that type of thing.

Selena: This, then.

Ryan: This, then, yeah. "So For while bodily training is of some value..." It's of value.

Selena: For your body.

Ryan: It matters.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Then he goes on to say, "...godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." So he's saying, get these loves ordered correctly. But we must not fall on either side of either trench, on both sides of that road. Meaning we can't say that bodily training is of supreme value.

Selena: And our physical beings will want... the flesh part of us will want to say, will want to live in both of these ruts. I feel like the middle of the road is just like this hill that we're constantly just like rolling from one rut to the other. But, you know, as sanctification happens and the Lord is gracious, we're able to kind of stay, excuse me, right where the Lord wants us.

But again, we're not trying to avoid conflict or avoid, you know, feeling bad about ourselves or each other. Like, no, that's where the fire is. That's where we get refined. That's where the sanctification happens by God's grace. Right? We're not just trying to get through stuff to get to a better place. Like, no, you are in the better place. You have the Lord, where you're at is where He's ordained you to be.

So look at the lessons that are in front of you. Look at what God is trying to do in and through you and in and through your spouse and surrender, and surrender to the Lord.

Ryan: Yeah. That's good. So what do you say to a spouse who has let themselves go? Now, some of the things... I wanna speak to that spouse-

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: ...who has let themselves go. Is it loving to say you do not care how you appear, knowing that your spouse cares and has expressed the desire for you to care? I'll say it that way. There's a line to be drawn here because I can

picture a husband being like, you know what, wife you've really let yourself go. And of course now he's heaping shame on this woman who maybe she does care and is trying, but having kids, taking care of those kids, the rigors of domesticity-

Selena: Lack of sleep,

Ryan: Lack of sleep.

Selena: The daytime, the nighttime.

Ryan: Lack of energy. Like maybe she's giving her all but cannot show up to the gym at 6:00 am every morning, cannot go for a three-mile jog every day because, you know, just logistically she cannot do it. But her husband saying to her, I care and I'm disappointed that you've let yourself go.

Selena: What should the husband say?

Ryan: That to me, I think is an unloving thing for that husband to say. Instead, he should be questioning, wife, how can I... how do I word this?

Selena: There it is. How can I help? How can I help you, wife? Like if the wife is desiring to have more energy, to do all the things. You know, I can just imagine trainers saying like, well, you can't afford not to, you know, have that go work out at the gym because you need that energy for later. I get that. I get that. I never regret doing that, you know, those kinds of things. I feel like you're describing me, which is fine. I'm here on this-

Ryan: I wasn't trying to.

Selena: No. It is though. Those are a lot of my realities. But you are so good at saying, "Wife, I see that these are desires that you have. Am I right or wrong in this? I see that you might be struggling, affirm or deny this, how can I help you in this? How can we do this either together? Or how can I alleviate some of the weight with the kids?"

Ryan: And the end game is not so you can fit into your pre-honeymoon bikini.

Selena: No, no.

Ryan: That's not the end game.

Selena: What is the goal?

- Ryan:** The end game is, are you as healthy as you want to be, can be, should be?
- Selena:** For the mission of Christ.
- Ryan:** For the mission of Christ. That is in our household. Meaning do you have the energy to do the day-to-day stuff that you need to do? Do you have the energy to think and, you know, manage the household and educate the kids?
- Selena:** In a joyful and a loving manner.
- Ryan:** But the big premise there is that you have expressed care, you have expressed desire. Now, as a husband, I'm saying, yeah, let's go.
- Selena:** And then what do you say to the spouse who has not expressed that?
- Ryan:** Well, I see this happen most often with... and you said it at the outset. You said, I desire nothing more than to... Well, with caveats. You desire the Lord, but you want to make me happy on every front. I think that's a wife thing, to be honest, because I've seen it more often than not a husband, and it's not exclusive, but a husbands tend to not have that same ambition.
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Meaning I've got the girl and I'm good. Like, I don't need to win her any more than I already have.
- Selena:** Sure. You see the challenges are already done and-
- Ryan:** And that's to me just patently false. It's lazy. It's not leadership. It's-
- Selena:** Sinful?
- Ryan:** Flaccid, if I can use that word. It's weak of those men to say that. you should be pursuing your bride every waking day. Now, she's not your idol, she's not your God, but you should be wanting to pursue her.
- Selena:** Oh, a woman is a glory of man, right?
- Ryan:** Yes.
- Selena:** So when I see a passive husband saying, I don't care, you know, I'd rather play video games in my underwear and eat Cheetos than get off my butt and go on the treadmill or go for a walk or do whatever it takes-

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: ...you've... and here's the thing I fear is that, brother, you have disqualified yourself, not from your marriage, but from any sort of meaningful engagement with our society. Like you are disqualifying yourself if you are mentally, physically lazy. Like that's a symptom of a heart. What is at the heart of that, that you don't look with sobriety at the thing that Christ is doing in our world, and taking that seriously? And that starts with disciplining yourself, loving your wife, which in my view, this is probably the easiest, lowest-hanging fruit. And then taking it seriously enough to make yourself fit for battle. That's a big thing.

So my encouragement to you, if you are in the side that has stopped caring or has let yourself go, is there is no shame or condemnation in Christ Jesus. He has saved you and His salvation is done. Now, what has He saved you to? He has saved you to something, to a mission. And that mission, at least in some part, as it's we're trying to say, is to care for your physical body in a way that you can look Christ in the face and say, I am caring for this body you've given me. You can be a worthy temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now you are worthy salvifically because of Christ. I wanna make that crystal clear. But Paul exhorts us to treat our bodies as temples for a reason. To not profane the body that God's given us. To not litterate, to not pollute it, to not fill it with toxins.

Selena: To not destroy it.

Ryan: To not destroy it by the death of a thousand cuts. And so for a reason, Paul is exhorting us. Now, if we don't care about that exhortation that to me is a big thing.

Selena: Deeper issues. Yeah.

Ryan: It's not just, you know... and this is why I get so up in arms about, you know, there's certain.... so the Baptists in the south... we don't live in the south, so this is not a reality I grew up with, but I know the caricature. Drinking is of the devil; dancing, of the devil. If you touch wine to your lips, you are basically the devil. [laughs] And that same preacher who says that will get up and he will be 200 pounds overweight because that good old southern cooking.

We have missed it on this, if we don't, as Christians, have a holistic view of like, we are not gnostics. And what I mean by that is there was an ancient heresy where they thought that everything physical was inherently kind of bad or less than.

Well, go read the gospel of John. One of the first things he says is that the light came and shone into the world and did what? He dwelled among us. He adorned flesh. He became the tabernacle that is flesh. And so all the gnostics are reading the first part of John, you know, rooting in holler and saying, Yeah, woo, it's the light. The light has come into the world. The light has shown in the darkness. Yes. Light, the spark, all this kind of stuff. And then John's like, whoa, flesh. [both laughs] And they're like, whoa, whoa, whoa.

So I think if we don't acknowledge the fact that we have both body and spirit, soul and flesh, that we have missed our... Let's say it this way. Our anthropology is not biblical, it's something else. Does that make sense? So get back to marriage.

As we bring this conversation to a close, how do you approach the spouse? Now, we've talked about being that spouse who is needing to work on this. Now, how do you approach the spouse who maybe has stopped caring? What are some quick ideas that we can---

Selena:

I think whatever you do, you know, you need to first acknowledge it together. There has to be that acknowledgment and getting to that place. I think is probably one of the hardest places because you are admitting... you know, you may be admitting sin and weakness. But praise God, right, that no longer has a hold on you, you are gonna be living in the light. And it's more freeing. It's full of life.

So whatever the remedy, once it has been established that you want to move forward, the desire is there, the repentance is happening, begin the journey of healing and health together. Whatever it is, do it together. Wife, be the helper. Show up. Do the work together. Be sensitive. Be thick-skinned.

In the beginning of any type of transition, there's gonna be an adjustment period. Like show up and be encouraging if that is your husband, you know. For the husband, I mean, it's like you said, be loving. Be the sacrificial leader. Make her laugh and encourage her efforts. Be there with her while she is... and help her see the horizon. Right?

I feel like men are very good at having the vision and seeing further out. I'm not that great in that right now. I don't know if it's a season thing or what. I think God has just wired and equipped men to be able to see out further. So you see that picture more clearly than I might. See that wife, embrace that, and say, okay, he sees it. I'm gonna trust him. He sees that we can do this. He says that we can, you know, work out together. We can go on a walk together. We can, you know, start spending some time together. Whatever it is, do it

together. And be encouraging of one another. Be humble with each other. Laugh with each other. Make it something you look forward to do together.

Ryan: That's good. My encouragement would be to get the order of your love and your focus right. In other words, understand the place of health in the life of a Christian, not just your marriage. So one of the big epiphanies for us was, what's a healthy body weight for us? Not, can I get down to whatever that number is? But what's healthy? What's strong? What is, you know, cardiovascularly? You know, I don't wanna be huffing and puffing if I walk up the stairs.

I don't want to be complaining if it's seven o'clock at night and I'm too, just too beat, no energy because my kids wanna wrestle again and I don't have the energy to do it. I don't want that. So I would say get on the same page about that.

Now, the biggest hurdle here is not shedding a few pounds, it's not running a few... that's not the biggest hurdle. The biggest hurdle here is apathy, is carrying together, and then orienting your lives in a way that you're not idolizing this, in a way that is dishonoring to God, but you're also not neglecting it in a way that's dishonoring to God. Find that happy medium, find that place that honors the Lord, and run with it. No pun intended.

Selena: But maybe.

Ryan: But maybe. [both laughs] We hope this has at least addressed the question. I'd hope we didn't nuance it to death. But I also hope that we weren't overly brash with some of the things we said. Well, trust the Lord to let the cards fall where they may.

If you don't know who Jesus is, we want you to know Him. He is literally the best thing that's ever happened.

Selena: Quite literally.

Ryan: I'll say that. If you don't know the story of the gospel, here it is. That we are sinners dead in our sin. We needed a savior. We can't save ourselves. As Voddie Baucham Ministries says, dead men don't reach. I'm dead. I need someone to grab me outta death and bring me back to life outta my sin. And God saw fit to do that by sending His own Son who lived a perfect life, died on the cross a sinner's death, but didn't stay dead. He was resurrected.

And if we place our faith in Him, we are resurrected from our death in sin onto new life in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. And lemme tell you, it's a game

changer. And that is the greatest understatement [both laugh] of the universe. He literally changed everything. And we want Him to do that for you. So we pray that this is one means by which He might be doing that.

So if you don't know Christ, talk to a friend who does, ask them to read the Bible with you. Go to a church that preaches outta the Bible. If you don't have either of those things, go to this website, it might help. It's thenewsisgood.com.

Let's pray. Father God, thank You for this body that You've given us. I pray that we would honor You with it. I pray that You help spouses navigating this issue or issues like it. Help them to see it with sober judgment and help them to steward their minds, their bodies, their souls, all of them unto Your glory and for the good of one another. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, thank you for joining us. As a reminder, if you wanna be part of the Fierce Fellowship, we would love that. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. With 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 scripture**
 - Romans 12:1-2
 - 1 Timothy 4:8
 - 1 Corinthians 7

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

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

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