Rvan & Selena Frederick

FOLLOW-UP: ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT HUSBANDS INITIATING INTIMACY

https://fiercemarriage.com/follow-up-answering-questions-about-husbands-initiating-intimacy

[00:00:00]

Selena:

Well, it's no surprise that there are a lot of questions after the last one or two episodes. And that's great. We need to have questions. We need to have dialogue. We need to be able to ask some of the hard things, ask about the things on the, you know, smaller end of the spectrum and all that kind of stuff.

Ryan:

I expected a little bit more pushback from the last two episodes we did, which had to do with husbands needing to be the primary initiators of sex in marriage. I'm actually surprised in a good way about that because I feel like, well, either people wrote us off and said, "you guys are crazy" or they said, "You what, it actually makes sense," other than the questions that we're going to address here today, which I think are very good questions and I think it'll be edifying, fruitful and necessary to go through them.

There's main two lines of questioning, if you will, that we've been put through. So anyway, I think it will be a good episode. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:56] < music>

Selena:

Well, I feel like the horse is patoot there because you made it sound like this last week that we got [Ryan laughs] many more questions than I thought. So I just kind of went for it. Sometimes you got to risk it, people. You just got to risk it.

Ryan:

The horse is patoot. I haven't heard that in a long time. Yeah, no, I think you're right. I think usually what happens is the questions that do kind of bubble to the surface are indicative of a frenzy of activity below. [both laughs]

Selena:

Did you really just say that?

Ryan:

If you've seen that skit, you know what that reference was to. Anyway. So I don't think you're off. I think you're right. I think there's good reason to talk about them.

Anyway, if you don't know who we are, my name is Ryan. This is my lovely, beautiful, wonderful bride, brilliant bride, Selena. We are the Fredericks. This

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is what we do. Most days we spend studying scripture, we spend writing, we spend managing the publishing side of our work. We do podcasts like this.

Selena: We. He.

Ryan: Well, she wrangles our lovely daughters and teaches them. I step in once in a

while and help.

Selena: You do. It's good.

Ryan: But it's a team effort

Selena: It is.

Ryan: So thank you for joining us. I want to say thank you to our newest Fierce

Fellowship members. So if you don't know what that is, that's basically our Patreon community. That represents over half, maybe even close to five eights—Three quarters. Probably five eights—of our monthly family income.

Selena: Yes. Thank you.

Ryan: So that means a ton to us that you have seen fit to partner with us. If you want

to learn about that, there are benefits. I'm fixing to get in there and update

that...

Selena: About perks?

Ryan: Because I haven't updated the perks in a while. But go to

fiercemarriage.com/partner and you too can be part of the Fierce Fellowship. Which of course is a nod to the Fellowship of the Ring, which I'm reading that

to our daughters right now.

Selena: The marriage ring.

Ryan: Oh, it works on two levels. That was... Yeah. Wow.

Selena: You're welcome.

Ryan: That's why you get paid the big bucks. I'm reading that to the daughters right

now, which you know this.

Selena: I do know this.

Ryan: We're reading *Lord of the Rings*.

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Selena: We take turns reading at night.

Ryan: Our 10-year-old and our 7-year-old are really into it. It's getting good. We're

about halfway through the first book. The Fellowship-

Selena: I've been reading *Little Women* to them. He's been reading *Lord of the Rings*,

which is good.

Ryan: We got through *The Hobbit*.

Selena: We got through *The Hobbit*.

Ryan: We got through A Wrinkle in Time. We're doing Little Women. I'm about to

read *Hatchet* to them. I might do that between book one and two of *Lord of*

the Rings. We'll see.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Anyway, sidebar. [laugh] So what are the questions we're getting? Basically

there's two lines of reasoning, and we're gonna start with, I think, the lowest hanging fruit, and then we'll get into some of the more theological parts of the

discussion.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: And the two lines of questioning are this: what... So we talked about men

being the primary initiators of sex in marriage. Well, what about the marriages... they do exist, I don't know to what degree or to what percentage.

It's the minority. But I don't know if it's a 5% minority or a 49% minority.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: No one's done the studies that I know of. But what do we do with the marriage

is where the wife desires sex more than the husband?

Selena: Right. She has the greater drive.

Ryan: In light of the conversation we just had, which is, Hey, husbands lead in this

area, it's good and right and beautiful and true and-

Selena: And here's how to do it.

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Ryan:

...step into it. And it's a loving thing. It's not a demanding thing. We talked about all that last week and the week before. So some wives wrote in and we can read some of their questions. That's the first line of question.

The second one is this idea of sex and intimacy as covenant renewal. We did receive some pushback on that. I think it was good and warranted, but as spoiler alert, I think it mostly comes down to semantics.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: But I think the spirit of it is riding in line with what we're given in God's word.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: So let's read this. We have, gosh, a number of YouTube comments. If you're

not a part of our YouTube community, do subscribe to that because once in a while, these types of conversations unfold there in the comment section. We can't even read it all because there's so much that has been said here. But I'll read the first comment that kind of kicked off the larger conversation. Selena, do you wanna read this? It's from at @nnylaso. I dunno how to pronounce

that, but that's a YouTube subscriber.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: And Here's what she wrote.

Selena: "I'm a 43-year-old wife of 14 years... and I am the "have I been good enough

to get a cookie?" husband in this scenario.

Ryan: So It's the wife, but she's played the role of that which we described as the

husband.

Selena: Got it.

Ryan: "Can I have a cookie thing?"

Selena: So she's asking more of it. "...Throughout our marriage, my drive has always

seemed higher than my husband's ... and we're learning about our attachment styles, which he is seriously avoidant. We have some DEEP stuff we're both working through. (Side note: I wish everyone who talks about this would shine more light on / include our smaller percentage, for I typically have to switch the roles and advice around and end up feeling a bit shamed for wanting it

more than my husband after listening to this sort of content.)

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Ryan:

First off, thank you for writing in the question. I just wanna do justice to some of the others that are writing the same question, to kinda mention what the way the wording it. @BeautifulSoulgurl basically this: "...I feel people think it's all men who want it more often in marriage." So it's kind of touching on it but in a more succinct fashion.

Olivia actually wrote in via I think a text. No, this was a question we got through our question form. By the way, if you have a question, go to fiercemarriage.com/ask. And she wrote this: "I often struggle listening to podcasts and reading books about intimacy where they assume that the husband has a higher sex drive when in our marriage, I, as the wife, more often have the higher sex drive. Reading many of the comments on your YouTube page for the episodes, 'Why husbands should be the primary initiators of sex end.' Many other couples deal with this as well. How would you speak to that mismatch? I totally understand and agree with men leading the marriage in this way. It's just that the way our drives work out are different than the stereotypical norm."

So let's go back to this first question as we look at this thread. Because I want to address one thing that she said. She said she ends up feeling a bit shamed.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: So, not ashamed, but shamed.

Selena: Shamed.

Ryan: As if we're heaping shame, or people who speak on this topic heaps shame

because she wants it more than her husband. And this is the sort of content tends to tilt in the way that the husband should want it more and that's the right order of things. Should this woman take on that shame? Should she feel

shame?

Selena: Absolutely not. No. Absolutely not. I mean, it's still the same conversation, I

think. It's just the roles are a bit flipped. Overall, the husband, yes, should be the primary leader and initiator of the culture of intimacy within their marriage. But there shouldn't be shame felt for desiring it more than your

husband.

Ryan: Yeah, absolutely not.

Selena: So apologies if that's what we-

Selena: That's not our intent.

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Ryan:

In this instance... Let's just talk about the asymmetry, if you will. We kind of addressed the husband being the one that typically wants more sex than the wife. And I think that is just statistically the case. But I would say in this same case, even if the wife wants it more, I think it is even more on the husband now to love her in this way and to initiate in a way that's commensurate with her desires.

And through all of this communication. So it's not like now the husband... okay, back up. We went and spoke at a marriage event this last weekend. Two weekends ago, actually. It was wonderful. God is good. We met a couple there where the woman is-

Selena: She came over to me after the woman's talk.

Ryan: She was very vocal about it.

Selena: The whole church knows actually, [both laugh] which is kind of funny.

Ryan: Which, if you have a solid church community that makes sense. Like you kind of know each other. You end up talking about these types of things in a non-intrusive way, mind you. So it was kind of a running joke between this couple.

That she like daily... it's a daily thing. And then she's the driver of that.

Selena: And she... Go ahead.

Ryan: So I'm thinking of her husband. I think I heard at one point, you know, and

husbands in this case, they kind of switch roles in the sense like they'll start

thinking and saying things like, "I'm not just a piece of meat."

Selena: She said that they've had to have these conversations where she... you know,

the conversation is the same. It's just by different people. Right. So like, where I would think that, you know, I would be saying, "I'm not just a piece of meat," he's saying that. But it's still... There's still two souls. Like a male and a female,

and they're still...

I think the enemy would be really, you know, fortuitous and keeping shame on people for "Oh, you're not in the right role." He's already trying to like, mix people's roles up, but now he's... you get shamed no matter what you're in. So you just can't play that game. You just gotta know where you are. You gotta know where you are with your drive, with your husband's drive. And you talk

about the things of how the husband can lead.

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She's like, yeah, you know, I kind of rolled my eyes at the whole, like... I don't know what I said. I think it we talked about it like two to three times a week, but she's like, you know, I wants it all the time, and she feels kind of weird and she doesn't always know what to do about that. So just own it and like, work it out with your husband and... [laughs] It seems like a beautiful thing that you shouldn't have to feel shame for. I mean, that's like with anything in marriage-

Ryan:

And then as far as how that changes the conversation we had the last two weeks is that I still believe that the husband now says, Okay, this is a need in our marriage. We are married together. We're one flesh. I am charged with loving you in a way that honors you, honors the Lord, and serves you.

Selena:

Well, she also said too, that that's how she expresses her love for him. So it's not just like a physical need all the time. It is-

Ryan:

That's why the next point we're talking about covenant renewal so important because if we don't see sex the way God sees it and we don't subscribe to God's definition of sex and then submit ourselves to that and let sex be all the things that it was designed to be, then it becomes a cookie meat scenario. I want a cookie, you're just a piece of meat. It leans toward that.

Selena:

It does.

Ryan:

But if you say, okay, this is covenant renewal, then whether you're the wife who is wanting it more, or the husband who is wanting it more, and the husband is saying, "Our covenant matters. I'm the head of this household in the biblical way and I'm charged with building a strong covenant with you. You desire this level of intimacy more often than me," I'm gonna note that and I'm gonna say, "I'm gonna initiate with you now. What time every day, sweetheart?" "Eight o'clock." Kids are in bed. Between eight and eight 15, we are renewing our covenant. And it's gonna serve that purpose. I'm gonna love you in that way.

Selena:

So what is the pushback that we got? Because I don't know that you actually shared that with me. What's the pushback that we got for the covenant renewal? Because you were saying you think it's semantics. Did we define it well? Was that maybe the problem that we didn't define what it meant, and then what was the pushback from that?

Ryan:

So the pushback was two main things. Basically, the idea of covenant renewal. This was just one person who wrote in. I'll just read it actually. So she says, "Hi, my husband and I watched part one of the husband initiating last night. He wanted to have scriptural backup for sex as marriage covenant renewal. So I thought I'd reach out to see if you had any. He thinks that renewal means

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something is broken and doesn't see sex that way. I actually view it as covenant renewal, but as a reminder, not that something is broken, but that we belong to God and have declared that we belong to each other."

Again, this is a text message we received through... We have a phone number on our Ask page that I mentioned earlier. I do think that's a semantical thing. Like if you read the definition of renewal, it kind of puts this concern to bed. Do you want to read that really fast?

Selena: Yeah, it's a noun. Renewal is an instance of resuming an activity or state after

an interruption or renewal synonyms are resumption... recommencement?

Ryan: Recommencement, yeah.

Selena: Recommencement, sorry, continuation, and re-establishment. So it's both and

kind of like if something... we're broken, it is a way to renew it, but also something that has not stopped or is not broken, it's just a continuation of

declaration. So I think it's a both and.

Ryan: It's not that the covenant ended and now we need to re-up. It's this constant

reminder. It's the same-

Selena: Well, I think God's-

Ryan: The reason we go back to the Lord's table and we celebrate communion, that

is a sense of covenant renewal. It's not that God in any way that covenant was fractured or broken. If we've sinned against God, we need to come back to

Him. The default in marriage is not unity.

Selena: No.

Ryan: It's isolation.

Selena: And drifting away from, yeah.

Ryan: So when we are trying to live as one flesh... we are spiritually one flesh. We're

trying to live in unity in that one flesh. That's what covenant renewal is. I would say maybe covenant refreshing. And it's not that anything changed or broke, it's that we are... because we're still in our flesh, because we're still, you know,

not fully sanctified. Bringing it back together.

Selena: I think that God just made intimacy and sex so beautiful and layered in its

meaning and understanding that why can't it be both and, right? It could be a renewal for trust that may have been broken, but it also, if you are very unified

with your spouse, it can also be a declaration and a continuation of keeping the strength of those walls. So I think like you said, it's probably semantics. We know that it's a continuation, which is a definition. I mean, you could look it up in the Greek or whatever. But, you know, wasn't it Paul just said, only abstain to pray if you need to, but then come back together so that the enemy doesn't-

Ryan: Attempt you.

Selena: Attempt you.

Ryan: Which actually goes into, again, understanding what sex is and why it was

given to us.

Selena: Right, the purpose of it.

Ryan: Which as a recap, okay, so this rule remains: sex plays a vital role in your

marriage. It's intrinsic to the marriage. So intrinsic that in God's order it should not exist outside of the marriage. That's how intrinsic it is to the marriage. It's like a human heart is intrinsic to the human body. If you remove the heart from the body, the body and the heart are both dead. But the heart in the body actually vitalizes the body. It fills the body with life. So that's kinda the

first piece.

Well, what exact role does it play if it's intrinsic to marriage? Well, number one is it's covenant instigation. And that it consummate the covenant you make, the vows that you take before God and family, giving yourselves of one another. Then this is the physical consummation of that giving and that joining

in covenant renewal, which we talked about.

And then it accomplishes the purposes that sex was designed to accomplish. These are all scripturally borne out. Maybe we do another episode on this. We

have done an episode in the past, but not on video.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: It was about... believe it or not, 100 episodes ago.

Selena: Really?

Ryan: So it was about two years ago.

Selena: I always feel like sex episodes, I'm like, didn't we just do one like two weeks

ago?

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Ryan: We're hitting three in a row here. So the purposes of sex very quickly.

Pleasure, obviously. And they're not any order of priority. But pleasure. Obviously, see Song of Solomon for that. Clearly there's pleasure to be had. Procreation, Genesis 2. Relational connection. Again, go back to the Song of

Solomon. Protection from temptation. This is what you brought up.

Selena: Yeah, 1 Corinthians 7:5, "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: So you're protecting one another, in a sense.

Selena: Helping each other avoid temptation.

Ryan: You see how this is not directly related to how it feels? I think that's maybe

where if we don't remember these things, it just feels like, Oh, you just want the feels of sex as opposed to this is how you feel connected to me. So like if a wife or a husband is being approached by their spouse and they say, "I desire you," if that spouse has forgotten the fact that your desire is more than physical, then I'm always going to feel like you just want to use me. You see

what I'm saying?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: We've done this in the past where I've had a rough week and I'll come to you...

and this is the next one after protection is comfort. Comfort me, wife. I need to feel your embrace. I need to feel connected to you. I need to feel your love.

Selena: It's a safe, familiar place that you can feel loved. There's no threats. It's just

the safety of that. It brings comfort.

Ryan: And biblically speaking that is found in Genesis 24. When Isaac brought her

into the tent of Sarah, his mother, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Beautiful.

Selena: Yeah, so good.

Ryan: Beautiful picture of it. Then sex is a reminder of the gospel. This is the one

where it can really go off the rails if you're not careful because the analogy breaks down at some point. But basically this. It's a picture of the garden, meaning that we are back in a garden state where we are naked and Ryan & Selena Frederick

unashamed with one another. That you know me fully, I know you fully, and I still love you, you still love me.

Well, why do you still love me? Because you were loved by God in Christ. In our sin, God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. The intimate act of that, especially when you recognize that you are in need of grace, is going to be a picture of the gospel that you can still love me when I don't deserve it. You can still give yourself to me when I don't deserve it.

I mean, man, that's a beautiful picture in a similar way to consummation of our union. And it's a dim foreshadowing of like when I desire you and long for you and want that connection with you, and I hope for you. If I'm gone on a trip, I'm hoping and anticipating our reunion, our consummation, our renewal once again. That's a little bit like looking forward to Christ reigning and His bride and that unity that will result from that perfect reign when all things are made new.

And finally, sex serves the purpose of being unto the glory of God. God made it. It's good. He delights when His children enjoy that which He has made for their enjoyment. And so, yeah, it's covenant renewal and so much more. But I'd say primarily it's covenant renewal.

Now somebody did push back. This is a little bit on the same note, but it's a different focus. This was on YouTube as well. He said, "If intimacy is covenant renewal (which I agree it is), this covenant is a mutual thing. Consequently, I'd expect this renewal to be a mutual desire- in the ideal state. Consequently, both should equally be the initiators and if it isn't the desire of one of the partners, one might want to ask why that is. The idea that (generally speaking) wives do covenant renewal more out of duty and the husband out of desire doesn't sound healthy. God desires us to desire the covenant with Him as He desires it with us. It is meant to be mutual and only due to our sinful nature it's one-sided."

Selena: I agree.

Ryan: 100% agree.

Selena: 100% agree it's-

Ryan: Our sinful nature.

Selena: Right.

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Ryan: He nailed it at the end in that-

Selena: He answered his own question really. Ideally without sin, we both would

desire this, right? We both would have the same level of desire at the same time. You know, we just be there and matching up with each other every single

time. But that's just not where the chips fall because of our sin. Right?

Ryan: Alas, we are stuck in these mortal trappings of our flesh.

Selena: It's not to say that it can't happen. Like we've had many times where it's like

both desires are matched and it's just like,-

Ryan: And that's by far the most beautiful, awesome experience in my experience. I

mean, would you disagree?

Selena: No. But I don't want it to feel like, you know, like the giving of one another,

like sacrificing... not sacrificing, I guess, but just being selfless in how you give to each other is also a beautiful thing. I think the experiences are different.

The expressions might be-

Ryan: The notion that it's not healthy to do something out of duty, I think I disagree

with that because-

Selena: Same.

Ryan: I mean, come on. If I only did the things I wanted to do in the name of health,

I wouldn't even be here right now. I would be doing any other thing. I mean, I like doing this... but you know, I would have got up two hours later. I would eat nothing but, you know, Cheetos and... I don't know. I only like Cheetos

actually. Duty matters.

Selena: If you fall to the lowest common denominator, like of course, you're gonna,

you know... but that's, yeah. And he hit the nail on the head. And I think it was

a good thought. There's no question there really.

Ryan: Other than the idea that it's unhealthy inherently to do something out of duty.

I think it's loving.

Selena: You have to set your emotions and desires aside to do things that are dutiful

when your emotions and your desires don't match up with that duty. You have

to. When it's a call to God and a submission to the Lord.

Ryan: What that is is it's not a rejection of a truer desire. It's an elevation and a

recognition of a higher desire.

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Selena: That's good.

Ryan: I desire to honor my covenant more than I desire to do what I feel like doing

right now.

Selena: That's good.

Ryan: So in a sense-

Selena: You're welcome.

Ryan: In a sense, you're right.

Selena: It's good.

Ryan: But the whole point is the duty is born from desire. Deeper, more elevated

desire.

Selena: Absolutely. Amen.

Ryan: Amen and amen. We hope that that was helpful to you.

Selena: Yeah, hopefully that was clarifying. I think it was a good conversation. We

definitely could do that purposes of sex. I didn't know that we haven't done

that for a video yet.

Ryan: Well, we started YouTube about a year and a half ago, I think.

Selena: It's been two years.

Ryan: Yeah. Well, we'll look back and see if it was on video because I think that's

helpful to understand what purposes sex plays in your life. Like it's a crass analogy, but if you see sex as a tool, as a covenant tool, that tool has many uses and you can... I gotta stop because the analogy talking about sex stuff

gets weird. Okay. Did we address it? I hope the wives feel-

Selena: I think so. I think if there's any other questions or comments, please write

them in and we'd be happy to look at them and take the time to answer them. And yeah, I think for wives, no shame. There's no shame in your level of desire. So shame be off of you and walk in the desires that the Lord's given you and talk to your husband and have those conversations. And husbands lead in the way that God's called you to lead. We're all called to submit under the Lordship of Christ and the authority that the Bible gives us. So again, working

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that out together and working it out in a way where you both feel valued and loved and respected.

Ryan:

Can I drop a bomb real fast? Because something to be aware of. This is why communication is so important. Okay, pornography addiction is a real thing and some husbands are giving their sexuality and their vitality and their vigor to that.

Selena:

Right. And that was always my question of when they're like, my husband doesn't desire it. And I'm like, is there an addiction or something playing a role?

Ryan:

You don't want to jump to that conclusion. But you look at the statistics and look at how many men are beholden to this habitual sin. I would have to ask that question of that husband and he would ideally be able to shoot me straight and we can go from there.

Selena:

Absolutely.

Ryan:

So that's why communication is so huge. Again, I'm kind of dropping a bomb a little bit.

Selena:

No, I did ask her, well... you know, we talked and she's, you know, as I talked to her and got to know her and her husband a little bit more through her conversation, it was clear that there's no addiction there. It really just is the desire. But that was my first thought of, okay, if she's desiring it more, is she feel like she's unnaturally desiring it more because he's just absent sexually? And why is that? So you really have to...

Ryan:

It's based on the frequency. We didn't want a day. That's a pretty high frequency. So most guys I think don't have to be struggling with pornography to not have that same level of desire.

Selena:

Right.

Ryan:

Again, we could talk about that a lot longer. We're going to end the episode there.

If you don't know who Jesus is and you've made it this whole episode, we want you to know who Jesus is, not because He is a good teacher or because He's a good man, but because He is the very son of God sent to save sinners in their sin, draw them out of their sin, draw them out of their death, spiritual death, and eventually physical death. And that Jesus lived a perfect life, died a

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sinner's death, didn't stay dead, resurrected, and now reigns at the right hand of the Father and is reigning even today. Christ is Lord.

So we want you to recognize Christ as Lord and your Savior. To do that, we recommend you talk to a friend who's a Christian. Say, who is Jesus? How can I know him? I want to be saved. Read your Bible with them. Find a church that preaches out of the Bible.

There's a website that we send people to that has a link to find good churches. The website is thisthenewsisgood.com. Go there, read up on what the gospel is, find a good church, and pray that the Lord uses that to draw you unto Him, that you might be saved, and we can call you brother, sister in Christ.

Let's pray. Father God, You are mighty, good, wonderful, and true, and You are holy, and You've given us this holy gift that is sex within the covenant of marriage. We ask that you'd help us to steward it well, that we might enjoy it unto Your glory, that we might love one another for the good of our union, for the sanctification of our souls, and to make us more unified in all areas of marriage.

I pray for the couples that feel brokenness in this area. Lord, You see them. You know them, you know why they feel brokenness, and You are the healer. I pray that they would look to You and as the healer, they would find healing through You, through Your word, through wise counsel, through wise living. I pray that You would guide them, Holy Spirit, as You probably undoubtedly already are. It's in your precious Son Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, thank you again for joining us for the Fierce Marriage Podcast. If you

want to partner, we would love that. Join the Fierce Fellowship at fiercemarriage.com/partner. We look forward to seeing you there. Otherwise,

this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is-

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: Lord willing, we'll see you again in about seven days. So until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

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PODCAST NOTES

Recommended resource

• <u>thenewsisgood.com</u>

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