

DON'T BE BLINDSIDED BY DIVORCE, DO THIS MARRIAGE CHECK UP!

<https://fiercemarriage.com/dont-be-blindsided-by-divorce-do-this-marriage-check-up>

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Ryan: All right, friends, today we're coming at you with a little bit of a checkup, right? Once in a while, it is good, healthy, right, I think wise, for us as husbands, as wives, to take a good, hard look at what parts of our marriage are going unnoticed or uncared for. Are there any areas of your marriage that are being neglected?

So I can't tell you how many times people have come to us and they've reached out through the question form that we have or through the phone number or just in real life, and they'll say, "My wife left me and I didn't see it coming," or "my husband has filed for divorce and I didn't see it coming." What leads to that? What causes this?

Today we just had this... I had this conviction to just encourage you, to challenge you, to give you an opportunity to do a head-to-toe checkup of your marriage. So that is what today is. We'll see you on the other side.

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Ryan: Greetings and welcome to the Fierce Marriage Podcast. My name is Ryan. This is my lovely wife, Selena. We've been married 20 years.

Selena: 22, I think this year. [Ryan laughs]

Ryan: You are remembering it wrong.

Selena: 21.

Ryan: Yes. [laughs] We got married in 2003.

Selena: Yes. I was just adding that up. Thank you.

Ryan: It was awesome. It was an awesome day despite our fashion choices. But yeah, we've been doing the Fierce Marriage Podcast for about five years now, I think. We started it when we launched a book called Fierce Marriage and just kept going because we had fun. And we found that it was helping people. It's very selfish of us.

So we're asking you... this is the question. I'm asking you, Selena, and our listeners, what part of our marriage might we be ignoring?

Selena: I mean, you talked about what are the bottlenecks because everybody... I mean, if you think about your house, right, there's always bottlenecks in kind of the household, the economy of the home. For us, it's laundry. I mean, I just cannot keep up and I can't employ my children to keep up with me. [laughs]

Ryan: They make it worse.

Selena: So when I think of it like that, Hey, what is out of sight, out of mind, and what are things that we are just not seeing? It's hard to see unless I really talk to you. I mean, it's purely would be based on feelings, I think. Like, hey, maybe I don't feel loved or... And even that it's like, well, do you need, you know...

Ryan: That's just it. See, you don't know what you don't know.

Selena: Yeah, you don't know what you don't know. So how do you know? [laughs]

Ryan: We have an annual checkup at the doctor. You don't know if there's something going on with your body because you're not a doctor. You don't have all the ways to look at and measure to understand the things. So you go to the doctor and they say, Hey, it looks like your cholesterol is high or you're pre-diabetic or whatever the thing is. And you would never know that until you do a head-to-toe checkup.

Selena: And you might think your marriage is great, right? You might be thinking, wow, I think we're good. And I feel like that's probably a red light right there. Just thinking that you're good. Because I don't know, when it's smooth state... it's like when it's good, you know it's good. But when you're like justifying that it's good, is it really good? When you're kind of debating that, right?

Ryan: I will say, yeah, I think there's a layer to go beyond that depending on how far you go is better. But if you're not even asking the questions, how's our marriage, then that's... I mean, you could be just completely missing this.

So why are we talking about it? For one, divorce is rampant. It's become so common in our culture. Marriage is seen with such a lack of sobriety and commitment by a lot of people that as soon as marriage gets bad, the commitment goes out the window.

Selena: Well, even the tenacity to stay committed is like zero. There's nothing there.

Ryan: And that's part of the reason we're here is to remind couples that the marital covenant is massive and strong and it's important, and it's the means by which human families flourish. This is the container within which-

Selena: It's God's design. Yeah.

Ryan: ...it can grow and within which our children grow. So we're trying to constantly show you the beauty of that. But divorce is still very rampant. Another thing that I've been thinking through and wrestling through is the idea that 70% of divorces are initiated by women, by the wives.

Selena: Interesting.

Ryan: Very interesting.

Selena: Well, why?

Ryan: Lots of guys get blindsided by it. They think everything's going great. They're off, they're building a life. In their mind they're thinking, I'm just moving ahead. I mean, in some cases maybe they've checked out too.

Selena: Well, clearly. Yeah.

Ryan: I mean I talked to a few-

Selena: Maybe not checked out, but again, ignored.

Ryan: It's like, "My wife just gave me notice. Like she's filing... What do I do?" And obviously, any guy that goes through that is going to look inside and say, what have I been missing this entire time?

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: The analogy that we talked about beforehand was... I feel like a lot of guys are surveying their land, they're looking at the kitchen window out the front yard — that's how our house is set up anyway. The front yard's out the kitchen window — and thinking, Man, this grass is looking great. I've mowed it. You know, maybe I'll trim by the fence a little bit. In general, the place looks great, but behind them, the house is burning. Like the back of the house is on fire and they've just not realized it because they've not taken a look back there. They're too focused out front.

Selena: Well, and then the wife, you know, what has she done to contribute to the fire? Has she just been watching it? Maybe it's hard to show your husband,

Hey, big, huge fire back here. Because then you are also putting yourself at the responsibility of that as well. Because you've just watched it. You've just let it happen kind of, and you haven't helped your husband in some ways possibly see the fire. I mean, it's never just one person's fault in the marriage.

Ryan: It's very rarely one person's fault, I'll say.

Selena: Yeah. To use the analogy, it's like she noticed a little fire was starting in the corner of the living room and she's saying, "Husband, the living room's on fire. Let's put it out." And he's saying, "Okay. Yeah. Yeah." Or he's ignoring or didn't hear the signals because she's not saying it clearly or she didn't let him know and pretty soon it's a raging fire and she's out the back door running away.

Anyway, the analogy has run its course. The point is this will blindside people. And so we need to have a mechanism by which to actually check in so there aren't areas of our marriage that are untouched and undefended. Right.

Selena: We talk about this, you know, I think in a lot of our communication books, but in how we kind of take care of our marriage, you've talked about the tinder underneath the forest, right, and how we can kind of just let it build up. And all it takes is just one spark, one little conflict that's just going to set it ablaze because we haven't been taking the time to clear out the tinder, to address the situation, address the conflict, give our husband, you know, the benefit of the doubt or extend forgiveness and grace further than we think we should and in more capacity.

Ryan: And the conditions for that wildfire, that catastrophe have to do with, if you're not watered, it's dry. The tinder is building up, like you said. So we're talking about tinder today. I think we're going to get to the watering piece, but we're going to give you some really tangible ways to think through your entire marriage.

Just as a quick kind of sidebar, I want to speak specifically to couples that are in their first 10 years of marriage. I think there's a season... I mean, and statistically speaking, I don't know what it is exactly, but somewhere around seven or eight years is when a lot of marriages kind of run aground. The analogy that we'll use... analogies are great, by the way.

So we're using this ship... if you're in a ship and you're out to sea or you're... we live in the Pacific Northwest, there's this beautiful place called Deception Pass. It's a really narrow waterway between the mainland and Whidbey Island. And there's a bridge that goes across it and it's a beautiful place to visit, but the currents are insane.

I picture in my head, you're in a ship going through Deception Pass, which is an apt name in this case, because you can feel deceived anytime. But if you're going through that and it's stormy and you're uncertain and you feel like you're underpowered as a boat, you're not going to make it and you're not communicating well. You're looking out the port side and your wife is looking out the starboard side — I've got to stay with the analogy — and you feel like this thing's going down, well, it's no safer to jump ship. You're not going to escape the storm by jumping out of the ship. You're only going to be now exposed completely to the elements even more.

So our encouragement here is if you're going through a storm, don't give up.

Selena: Right. This is that fierce tenacity that we talk about. Like fierce tenacity that never gives up and never gives in. This is one of the pieces that we ignore if we're always looking out there is if we're not in scripture, if we are not around like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ consistently, weekly, almost daily, if we are not killing our sin, then when the storms come, we're going to feel overpowered, we're going to feel... it's like we haven't been working out for months or years at a time, and then all of a sudden we're being called on to lift for me a hundred pounds. That's really hard to do if I haven't built up to that.

We have to understand that right now is the decision-making process. This is you are sowing seeds for the future. You are clearing out the tinder, you're building your foundation. So you have to evaluate each of those pieces in light of what scripture says and in light of who God is.

Ryan: To summarize, to get through the storm, the solution is not to abandon ship or run the ship around. It's to sail better. It's to sail better and trust the vessel that God has given you to get you through the storm. And so we're here trying to help you sail better.

Selena: We're helping you learn to say it better.

Ryan: Again, talking about this divorce thing and this... by way of seeing what are the common problems that would precipitate kind of a blindsided spouse, what problems are typical causes for divorce? Let's go very quickly through this list.

The number one cause, right? This was actually a surprise.

Selena: I was surprised by this.

Ryan: The number one cause for divorce... what would you have said if I hadn't told you?

- Selena:** I thought it was infidelity and trust. Absolutely.
- Ryan:** The number one cause for divorce is communication issues.
- Selena:** Which makes sense because that leads to typically...
- Ryan:** We've said it and I'll say it a hundred times again, but like, if you can get communication down, it is the linchpin. It is the thing. If you can figure out how to communicate, almost everything else you can work through as a couple. So yeah, communication issues is number one.
- Selena:** Okay. I think you need prayer about communication and you need God to open your eyes on how to communicate. For me, that's been a thing of, okay, these are things, Lord, that you're telling me I don't have to care that much about. Like you're telling me that my anger, my pride, all of this sin that's coming to fruition and bubbling up doesn't have to be there because you freed me from that first of all and this really isn't that big of a deal.
- What's really at stake here? Well, my pride, I'm frustrated. I feel these feelings. Well, just keep pushing through because... you don't have to respond and react just based on what you feel. You can just keep pushing through, know that the smoother waters are ahead. And that if I'm consistent and if I'm going to be... you know, I'm going to keep speaking scripture and I'm going to keep going through the things that I know, the promises of God, who God is, that's going to be my steadfast foundation for getting through some of the storms. Right?
- Ryan:** That's good. We're gonna go through more of these common causes for divorce. We do have lots of communication material, so look that up on fiercemarriage.com. There's lots of podcast episodes. We have books on communication. Check those out.
- I want to put these causes into categories here because there's causes that are the ones that... the sneaky causes-
- Selena:** And there's ones that are just blatant right there.
- Ryan:** So we're going to use the analogy of a house here coming up. There's rot that can kill a house, that can-
- Selena:** It's like unseen?

Ryan: Yeah. Our termites can eat out a wall and pretty soon the whole house is crumbling down.

Selena: The mold.

Ryan: Those are sneaky. Then there's the gas leak that explodes the house. That's not sneaky. [laughs] That happens all at once. So the cause for divorce, communication, that's sneaky. Infidelity and trust issues. Well, if a guy or a gal who has an affair will not be blindsided when their spouse says, "I want a divorce." They will understand where that came from. Now you may wonder, where'd the affair come from? That's another conversation.

Financial challenges. Sometimes these are sneaky too, because they can lead to stresses and bitterness toward one another because of maybe spending or a lack of earning or whatever the issue is. This is another sneaky one.

Selena: Lack of intimacy and emotional connection.

Ryan: It's similar to the communication.

Selena: It is similar because it is hard. I think any type of intimacy is difficult when you are not connecting and you're not able to kind of get through the initial discomfort or awkwardness. You know, we talk about intimacy being a part of your rhythm of life. Like consistent intimacy. This is what it wards off, right? Everything we're talking about today is why you need to be-

Ryan: Could it be that God has wired men with a sex drive that gives them the incentive to go to their wife and push through communication and He's wired women with a desire to connect emotionally before satisfying the sexual need of her husband necessarily? Could it be that that's a mechanism given by God to ensure that couples only go to each other for that and they seek connection in that and it brings them emotionally closer.?

Selena: Right. Yeah. The word "push" feels hard. Like when a husband pushes. It's like, no, a husband is going knowing that there might be some conflict or pushback, but both are willing and committed to kind of work through the situation.

Ryan: You're fighting for your marriage.

Selena: Yeah, you're fighting for your marriage.

Ryan: Ultimately, I love you, ultimately I want this, but right now we just need to work through stuff so that we can have the ultimate thing we both want.

That's, I think, what you're getting at. So that's a sneaky one though, because if you don't deal with it, it'll bring bitterness and it'll continue to rot.

Selena: It'll continue to rot, yeah, your foundation.

Ryan: This next one is I think bigger than we realize or many realize. It's mismatched priorities and goals. How many times have you kind of lose touch with a couple on Facebook and then suddenly you'll see the husband or the wife is with a person and realize, Oh, wow, that guy or that girl actually doesn't really believe in God. They actually don't believe in marriage. They actually walked away... They've deconstructed their entire faith and now their marriage is in the fallout of that.

So there's mismatched priorities and goals. Well, how do you ward that off? Well, we're going to talk about examining your foundation and the good that that does. Some other kind of more overt ones. Addiction-

Selena: Substance abuse, gambling, pornography, all of these types of... using money, you know, shopping addictions, those kinds of things are all just going to tear at the fibers of a committed marriage.

Ryan: Another cause for divorce that we found online in our research was abuse.

Selena: Any form of abuse, physical, emotional, financial, you know, it's-

Ryan: Wait, wait, wait. So what do you mean...?

Selena: Sorry.

Ryan: This is where this gets tricky because literally everything is considered abuse nowadays.

Selena: This term is thrown around way too liberally.

Ryan: You said it in our pre-talk, you were like, "He hurt my feelings. I'm emotionally abused."

Selena: I'm not trying to be insensitive. I really am not. I definitely think that as a society we just embrace the word "abuse" way too quickly and way too easily. Which is a form of... People who really are abused, it feels like you're just throwing it in their face. Like you call yourself abused because your feelings are hurt where they are actually like... there are marks, there are scars, there are true evidence for abuse.

Ryan: Well, I think what happens a lot of times is you have one of these sneaky causes happening. The wife and husband are being estranged. She's growing bitter toward him. Maybe he's got some sort of addiction that he's dealing with. Like sadly, a lot of men do, whether it's alcoholism, porn, drugs, or video games or whatever. And that's creating problems. And then it'll create communication environments that are unhealthy. And so he will not love her and communicate well, and she will feel that, and she's looking for, how do I categorize this?

And so she'll talk to her friends... she'll get online, she'll get on TikTok, she'll talk to whoever-

Selena: Whoever's going to say, Hey, here's how you know if you're being abused.

Ryan: And then she'll say, "That's it. He's emotionally abusive" or "he's financially abusive." I have no idea what that even means to be honest. Does that mean he spends more money than her? Does that mean he doesn't let her-

Selena: Or you control. I don't know.

Ryan: Financial control. Right.

Selena: How do you qualify something as being abused? I would recommend taking it to your pastors, first of all, like-

Ryan: Well, there's a problem there because a lot of the couples that are blindsided by this are disconnected most often from a true body of believers. They've got a nominal faith, if any, and if they go to church, it's Christmas, Easter, and a few times in between.

Selena: Well, and that's where the foundation piece really comes into play, which I think we're getting to. I hate leaving people hanging, but you can let them hang, I guess, for a minute.

Ryan: So these are some common causes for divorce. Now we bring those up so that we can help defend against them. Now here's our solution for you. And we're going to use this analogy. We've used a lot of analogies today, but this is the one we're going to stick with for a little while.

Imagine you've got a house. Your marriage, your covenant is your house. How do you guard yourself, on all sides against divorce, against intruders, against as the song of Solomon puts it, the little foxes that would get into your garden and ravage your vegetables?

So here's number one, from bottom to top, inspect your foundation. Inspect your foundation. By the way, if you're listening to this, go home and bring this up to your spouse and say, "Let's do this checkup. Let's inspect our house. Let's inspect our foundation." And here's what that entails, asking these questions. How is our relationship with God?

Selena: So how is my relationship individually, personally with God? How's your relationship with God? How's our relationship and our orientation towards God within our marriage?

Ryan: Are we living in full light of scripture? Are we submitted to the wisdom of God? Are we submitting ourselves to obeying God as God?

Selena: Having faith and trusting that He is the one and true God, that His word is fruitful and faithful. How are we understanding and living that out? Absolutely.

Ryan: It's more than just hanging the sign on your wall that says "As for me and my house."

Selena: Oh, man. Going there.

Ryan: It's actually letting it be you and your house serving the Lord.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So how is your relationship with God foundation? Number two foundational piece, how is your relationship to Christ? Now Christ is God. So I'm not trying to act like we're talking to someone else here. But the point is, is Christ is our means for salvation. We look to Christ. We look to his righteousness. What is our relationship to our sin?

Christ, when he came on the scene, we talked about this last week in Mark... I think we talked about it. Mark one, the first thing he said was repent. So how's your relationship to your sin? Are you killing it or is it killing you? Are you dealing with the sin that is habitually in your life? Have you brought it to the Lord? Have you brought it to one another? John Owen said this, be killing your sin or it will be killing you.

Every guy that I've talked to that's struggled with this example, pornography addiction, they've always felt like they can't bring it up because they're ashamed, but it's slowly killing them. And as soon as they kill that sin, they go to their wife, they go to God, they go to their wife, they go to the pastor, they bring it out into the open, they say, how could I have not done this sooner?

Selena: Well, because the enemy wants to keep you in the darkness, wants to keep you cut off, wants to keep you... There's battles to be fought, right? So if you are not killing your sin, yes, it's actively killing you. Marriage takes work. What do you think those words mean? Like we say them over and over. And those words mean it takes work.

So when you're working through sin and repentance and you're bringing it to your spouse and you know, it's going to hurt them and they're going to be hurt, you're going to have to work through that. You're going to have to fight and have some fierce tenacity and get some resiliency and find your strength and identity in Christ to be able to stand there, to take it, and be committed to working through it. Because your covenant was built for this. It's built for this. It's not two perfect people coming together as two very imperfect people called sinners coming together so that God can use you to sanctify each other, to flourish His kingdom, and to be glorified in all of it.

Ryan: It's good. Very good. In terms of sin, just to get these on your radar. We talked about coveting and contentment last week, right, How comparison will crush you, and then said you should crush it. So...

Selena: Through gratefulness and through contentment.

Ryan: Talk about that. Talk about maybe living faithlessly. It's a sin to be faithless. We are called to live... anything that is not by faith is sin. So we're called to live with faith. Anyway, there are lots of categories of sin. The point is, is it should always be being killed.

Selena: Through confession and repentance. If you're not repenting to God daily, I feel like almost moment to moment for me some days, those are some red flags. If I haven't been on my knees and saying, God, forgive me. Like, I know that I have the pardon. I have this assurance of pardon, but I don't walk away and just be like, yeah, God gave me a pardon, like it's a bus ticket or something. Right? It's like, no, I need to repent. This is what He's called me to do.

Ryan: Jesus said, repent, turn, the kingdom of God is at hand. There's urgency there with turning away from-

Selena: There's a mix up with our heads and grace and forgiveness. It's like, well, I have grace and forgiveness. So I sinned. But it's covered. No, you still have to do the thing.

Ryan: It's still sin and it's still evil.

Selena: And you still need to repent of it.

Ryan: A final foundational piece here. And this one is challenging for a lot of people, and we're going to continue beating this drum. How is your relationship to Christ's bride? In other words, how is your relationship to your local church? Are you submitted under godly biblical pastors? What I mean by that is, do they actually have sway in your actual life?

Because in the West, our church culture has gotten so consumer-driven. We show up at church and it's like, "If you're not giving me something that I can take away, then you're not serving me well." No, like that pastor's job is to present to you the living word of God for the salvation and sanctification of human souls. And you're his sheep. If you are a malnourished sheep, that's on him. But if you're malnourished because you're not showing up to the pasture, because you're off in the wilderness, well, don't be surprised if a wolf picks you off.

So you need to be submitted to a local church. It's massively harder to be vulnerable in your marriage if you're living in honest, true Christian community, where you're under the teaching of the word, you're actually processing that living it out together.

Selena: And you're building friendship through fellowship with other believers, who you know you can go to and say, "Hey, can we pray about this. I'm really struggling with this," or "we've been going through this." Living in the light all the time is way easier than living in dark for a bit showing all of your garbage and airing your dirty laundry one time and then going back in the dark and then bringing all back your dirty. Just live in the light all the time. It's the freedom that we have, we've been given in Christ.

Ryan: And friends, it is the most beautiful-

Selena: It's wonderful.

Ryan: ...wonderful gift of God to give us His bride to participate in, as well as the bridegroom Himself. I mean, come on. So these are the inspector foundation pieces. We haven't even gotten into Hey, communicate better yet. We haven't even gotten to intimacy. We haven't even gotten to that stuff. So here we go.

So we have a foundation. Now we're building our house. Now these are going to be the walls of your house. Okay, now you're going to inspect the walls, you're doing a head-to-toe checkup. We should have foundation to roof checkup.

So here are the walls. Okay, communication. We'll say communication and conflict. Those two go together. Wall one. Intimacy, sex, wall two. Money wall, three. And then wall four is going to be priorities and or home economy. How are you dealing with the tasks of the home, the tasks of life?

We're not going to go through each section here. But you should go through each one of those four sections together. Here's what we want to challenge you to do. You're going to look at your spouse, you're gonna be tempted to say, here's how you should communicate to me, or here's how I should communicate to you, and here's how I've not done well. Some of that's productive.

Selena: But first.

Ryan: First, we want you to ask this. How does God want us to (blank) in our marriage? Or what does God want for (blank) in our marriage? What does God want for our communication? Look at your wife, look at your husband, and ask them that.

And get on the same page, because if your foundation piece is you've talked to that, okay, now what does God want for our sex life? Sex is good. He's given it to us. He gave it to us for multiplication. He gave it to us for pleasure. He gave it to us for comfort. He gave it to us to glorify Him. He gave it to us to get closer together to ward off the enemy. What does God want for us in that? Instead of-

Selena: Sounds like consistency.

Ryan: You don't give me what I want. So you can be better and I can get more or I can do better.

Selena: Or even self-deprecation of like, I'm not good at doing that. Like, is not self-deprecation as well? Like-

Ryan: Well...

Selena: In some form?

Ryan: This is why we say start with what does God want?

Selena: Yes, absolutely.

Ryan: And to know that here's the here's the key, the trick. Read your Bible. [laughs] I don't know if you saw that coming or not. We have lots of content on that where we do open up the Bible and kind of-

Selena: There's plenty of reading plans. There's plenty of tools out there. But open your Bible consistently daily, be fed by God's word, let it govern you, let it govern your feelings, whatever struggle you're having. This is what's going to allow you to write the ship in the middle of the storm, to keep the house free of mold, free of termites. And when they come, you know how to deal with them swiftly and with all the power that you need. Right?

Ryan: Again, that's well said. And again, just to kind of get the big picture here, people get blindsided, and they don't realize that they've let one of these walls completely rot out. So we're trying to say like, this is how we inspect every aspect of the foundation, the walls. Now we're gonna go into the house. Now we're gonna clean house.

In other words, we're gonna check the furnishings. Okay, we've talked about communication and talked about conflict. Yeah, we've talked about sex, money priorities. Now, okay, we can get all those things right. But are we creating a home that we can actually inhabit together?

Selena: That's gonna thrive, that's gonna be fruitful, that's gonna honor the Lord.

Ryan: Are we actually loving one another? Well, are we having conversations, creating a home culture that is in itself loving?

Selena: Yeah. And what does that mean loving? Like, you asked me the other day, like, do you feel loved? I mean, we don't define love as a feeling. It's a secondary thing. Loving someone is an active verb of being patient, kind, and gentle with one another. But then I would say we would push it further. Feeling loved is a result of actively loving how God has created and instructed us to love one another, right?

So we don't love just because of feelings. We don't love to get the feelings or experience those. We love because God first loved us and instructed us on how to love. When we love in that way, those feelings will follow and those experiences, the good things will follow, the promises of God will follow.

Ryan: 100%. I want to drive this point home. And we're talking about the inside of the house now. So what is the thermostat set to? I think you have a house that's warm. Do you have a hearth in your home that has a fire burning in it, where you are actually pursuing one another and stirring your affections for

one another? Are you asking and inquiring and wanting to know more of your spouse or more of what your spouse needs?

Selena: Well, this begs the question is what is your heart orientation when it comes to the home and your family? For the wife, are you always looking out there? Are you always looking at what you either don't have, or that you wish you had, or that... And again, we talked about desires, I think a few episodes back. We talked about how it's not wrong to have desires. But if your desires are not God's desires, if they are not lined up and on the same page and on the same timeline that the Lord has designated for you, then it might be a wrong desire for the moment.

Ryan: It's possible for desires to be in themselves sinful. We talked about that in the comparison episode last week. So there you have it. We have the foundation inspection. We have the walls to be inspected. Now you're looking into the home. Is it actually a place where it's filled with warmth and an environment where we can flourish as a couple?

Selena: Consistently.

Ryan: By the way, kids are in there too. They're going to flourish the more warm the house is.

Selena: Yeah, the more we work things out.

Ryan: The proverbial table that you're setting before them and setting before one another is-

Selena: Proverbial and literal. I mean-

Ryan: Literally. Yes, it's true. So our prayer here is that we have given you a tool and the opportunity to inspect the various facets of your marriage so that divorce is not part of your future, so that that word doesn't even pop in your head because you are actually looking at your covenant the way God would look at it as something that's strong, something that's important, something that is there for your flourishing, something that's not easy, but it's fully equipped to get you through whatever storm you're facing or whatever elements would come at you. Hopefully, that was helpful to you. I know it was helpful to us to think through these categories. Do you have anything else to add before...?

Selena: Yeah. I guess just don't strive to appear like your marriage is good or that you have it all together. And don't strive to hide the sin or the frustration, the darkness, the struggles. Don't make the effort there. Make the effort to come into the light. Put your effort, put your energy, put your focus, put whatever

it is that you're going to bring, put it towards living in the light and not in the darkness, not in the hiding.

Ryan: I love it. That's great advice. I second that. And I also will say, you might be wondering, well, how could I possibly live like that? How can I be that vulnerable? I'll be shamed, I'll be embarrassed, I'll be vulnerable in ways that I'm not ready to be.

Selena: It's all right.

Ryan: And we're here talking to you as people who have been through that. We're talking to you as people who have looked into the face of Christ, not literally, but in terms of reading His word and beholding the truth that is there and being utterly humbled by His righteousness, by the gift of salvation that's been offered to us. So, friends, that is the life of a human. It's one of constant repentance, of always having to turn away.

So the more you can embrace that reality, that's what it means to be a human, not just like to be human. Now the difference between just a human and a Christian human is one recognizes the need for repentance and salvation and the other does not. And we're telling you, repent and believe the gospel friends, even in your marriage. Like Selena said, don't try to appear a certain way. That goes directly into just what it means to be a Christian.

So you don't have to appear a certain way to be saved. Christ knows you, God knows you. And He said, while you were still sinners, I'll die for you. He's calling you unto Him. This is the call to you too, if you haven't yet to respond to that call and say, Lord Jesus, be my Lord, be My savior. You are King. I will bend the knee. I place my faith in You. And that's what it means to become a disciple of Christ, to become a Christian.

So we want you to do that. So what we recommend at this point is that if you have a friend who's a Christian, call them, text them, talk to them, say, read the Bible with me, please. I need to be disciplined. I want to know Christ. I want to, I want to walk this path with you. Find a church that preaches out of the Bible, find a pastor who can be your shepherd.

If you're having a hard time finding either of those things, we have a website that will help you in some way, prayerfully, is you go to thenewsisgood.com. There's some resources there that should prove helpful.

Let's pray.

Selena: Let's pray.

Ryan: Lord Jesus, thank You for the gift of marriage. Thank You for the gift and the ability to even look at ourselves. What a gift it is to have the ability to be introspective, to examine our hearts in light of what Your word has said, to see it, to see ourselves in that mirror of Your word and realize just how much we need You and how prone we are to falling into blindness. We need You to open our eyes, make us see. Help the couples, the wives, the husbands listening to this, help them to see and assess their marriage honestly, help them to see and assess their spouse honestly, from a loving perspective of trying to love them and help them as much as they can.

Lord, I pray they would be encouraged, challenged, even convicted where needed as they listen to this episode. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Amen, amen. Okay. So I said I'd mention the Fierce Fellowship. Did you hear that throughout the episode? Did you hear all those ads? There were no ads.

Selena: I did not.

Ryan: There were no ads. And the reason for that is not because ads are intrinsically bad, but simply because-

Selena: We already have supporters.

Ryan: We have our supporters. And that's how we wanted to do it because frankly we had one, and I'll just share the number, we had one company come to us and say, we want to do a weekly ad on your podcast because we get all these downloads and people listen. They said, we'll give you, I think it was like \$1,500 an episode. It ended up being... I forget what the numbers pan out to, but it was tens of thousands of dollars for the year and they wanted a year contract. And they were right there and I said, "That's really generous. I appreciate that, but that's not for us."

And the reason I said that was because a) I couldn't fully get behind the product. That's a huge thing. That's important. But also, and this is probably bigger is we don't want to add to the chaos and the ad noise in your life. We want you just to listen to an episode and get through it without any of that stuff. I'm not trying to throw other podcasts under the bus.

Selena: No, because very much listen to other podcasts and subscribe to some of those.

Ryan: But also, frankly, it takes a lot to produce something that pays off for those people. I want to focus on content. I don't want to focus on having to create compelling ads for you to have to fast-forward through. Anyway, if you want to be a part of keeping this podcast going, we would appreciate that. Just consider this. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. That will redirect you to Patreon, which is where we have our community called the Fierce Fellowship. And there are perks there, but mainly it's just, Hey, are you on board with the mission? If so, we want you on board with us. Anyway, that's the pitch.

I think that's it for this week. So this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

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

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