

DEALING WITH BETRAYAL OF TRUST (TRUST AND BETRAYAL 2 OF 5)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/dealing-with-betrayal-of-trust-trust-and-betrayal-2-of-5>

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Ryan: Marriage is amazing, right? It goes without saying. Or maybe it doesn't these days.

Selena: Because we have to say it.

Ryan: We have to say it. But marriage is also between two imperfect people. And so inevitably there's going to be times, sadly, but it's real, there's going to be times when trust is betrayed, when there's pain experienced, and it's excruciating pain because it's with somebody you've entered into a covenant with, who you've committed to love and maybe they've committed to love you too and they failed in that. So what do you do? What do you do in those moments when the pain is so intense, when the betrayal is so insurmountable? What can you do as a husband, as a wife in that situation?

So today we're continuing our series on trust, broken trust, betrayal, repairing broken trust. And we're going to tackle this first bit, which is triage. When you realize that your trust has been broken, that you've been betrayed, or that there's some... and it's not just infidelity. There's other ways you can be betrayed in your marriage. So when you realize that happens, how do we deal with that? Not just in our flesh, but biblically. How do we walk in step with the Spirit? How do we pursue covenant as God designed it, let it be the thing God designed it to be, despite maybe feeling like we want to give up? We're going to talk about that today. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:22] <music>

Ryan: Greetings and welcome, fierce listeners. Selena, it's been a few weeks since we've recorded.

Selena: It's been a few weeks, yeah. The sun's been out, so have we.

Ryan: We had some birthdays in there. There was the 4th of July in there.

Selena: Yes. We did a date night at our church with Out of the Dust. I think we posted that interview and that chat there, which was very encouraging, I think, to whatever state your marriage is in, right? You can always talk about how to continue to build unity and rebuild trust.

Ryan: One thing I really enjoyed out of that interview, if you haven't listened to it, go back one episode and listen to that episode. But I asked Chris about what he calls functional atheism in a marriage. I mean, you have a spouse who says they're a Christian, but they don't live like it. What does that look like? And that's what he found himself falling into. He said he was a Christian leading worship but was functionally atheist and lived as if God was not even there. So go check that episode out. I found that to be elucidating in my own mind.

Selena: Super encouraging.

Ryan: Real quickly, if you don't know who we are, I'm Ryan, this is Selena. We're the Fredericks. Welcome to the Fierce Families channel on YouTube or the Fierce Marriage podcast if you're listening to this. As we do this Betrayal and Trust series, at the very end, we plan on, Lord willing, to do an episode where we address all of your questions. I take that back. Some of the questions. We've already gotten a lot, and they're long. So because this is a big topic, there's a lot to be explained when a lot of times you write in your question.

If you have a question for us, you can ask that. You have a better chance of it being answered if you make it succinct. You don't have to cut it too short, but make it succinct. Just go to fiercemarriage.com/ask. That's A-S-K. There's a form there where you can either text in, you can call in, or you can type in with your question.

This is a very tough topic, and so we want to give folks a chance to talk back to us. We want to speak directly to whatever... If you've got a burning issue in your own heart or in your marriage dear listener, there's a good chance someone else does too. So feel free to ask that question. [Fiercemarriage.com/ask](https://fiercemarriage.com/ask).

Okay, Selena, where did we go last time? We had one episode that was part of this series that we did first. Then we did the interview that... we actually skipped a week. I don't know if you knew that, but we skipped a week. 4th of July. We rarely do that, but we had to. Then we did the interview, which was a bonus thing. Where are we now? Where have we been, and where are we now in this series?

Selena: So our first week, we started with defining trust. We talked about a cruciform trust, so a trust that is vertically. We trust God because He is trustworthy. He is our first and foremost, the first stop of how we learn to trust, where we learn to trust, who we should trust, and why and how. Not to be repetitive.

And then that trust with our Father, our Heavenly Father, should ideally work itself out vertically, right? So we have this cross sort of form of up and down and across-

Ryan: You mean horizontally as well?

Selena: Horizontally, yes, which creates this picture of a cross. So cruciform trust. In the case of our conversation for Fierce Marriage, what does trust look like in marriage? What does it look like to build it, to break it? And how does the Bible command and instruct us to deal with broken trust? So those are kind of where we started, right?

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: We talked about trust and love, how trust kind of precedes love and vice versa, how trust requires faith, how trust and faith are not the same thing but they are closely related. We went through a couple of proverbs, contrasted it with foolishness of who not to trust and why you shouldn't trust them. Trust and obedience, again, two different things, very closely related, typically go hand in hand.

So we are now going to define betrayal. Because we've talked about trust, we need to talk about betrayal, what it means, and biblically how we're supposed to respond to it as Christians.

Ryan: So I'll use another... I like analogies. So you have a healthy marriage, right? So compare your healthy marriage to a healthy person. A healthy person is going to have a heart that's beating, a circulatory system that is functioning, there's no gaping wounds. And so what we've effectively done is we've described what health looks like, what trust should look like.

Now we're stepping into triage, where you've just been in an accident or some sort of wound has happened and you're bleeding, and that health is now...

Selena: Compromised.

Ryan: Compromised. And so we're going to talk about the rebuilding piece in more detail next week as I understand it. But today we're just talking about how do you stop the bleeding?

Selena: Yes. So you've been betrayed, the accident, the analogous accident is trust has been broken, betrayal has happened at some level, which we can talk about and we're going to define, how do you handle this as a Christian? How do you deal with this within your marriage covenant? Because the Bible does give us

clear instruction on how to walk through this together in order to keep our commitment and covenant.

Ryan: So here's the big caveat. This is a touchy topic. So if you know somebody who's been through a betrayal... and again, I said this at the intro, but it's not just infidelity. There are other ways to experience betrayal in your marriage. We're going to talk about that.

But if you've ever walked alongside somebody, you've been through it, and you're in this triage moment, it's going to be very emotionally charged.

Selena: Very emotionally charged.

Ryan: And so what we're trying our best to do is to not discard or disregard-

Selena: Or ignore, yeah.

Ryan: ...or ignore the emotional aspects of what we're going to talk about. But we really need you as listeners to walk with us into what God's word says, not what Ryan and Selena say. We're going to use some info from the Gottmans, which they are big in relationship spaces and done a lot of research. We don't really even hang our hats on what the Gottmans say.

Selena: No.

Ryan: But really, we need to look at the picture of trust and forgiveness and sin that God gives us in Scripture, and let that be our foundation. So we take ourselves, and if this is you, take yourself off the foundation of exactly how you feel. And instead, set yourself on the foundation of what does God's word say? How should I objectively act? And that's not to discard how you're feeling, but that's where we act from.

Selena: Well, and that's the fruit of the Spirit at work in you in the midst of this is when you are able to exercise self-control. Like, yes, you are probably going to cry. Yes, there's going to be raging emotions. There's going to be words you're going to need to repent of. We are encouraging you to harness the tongue, right? We're encouraging you to step away from contributing to this pile of sin that is continually growing. We are saying, yes, feel what you feel. Acknowledge what you feel, but don't let it steer the ship of your heart and your covenant.

Ryan: That's well said. So with that caveat, let's define betrayal. It's not just emotional affairs or sexual affairs, but it includes other things as well.

- Selena:** Yeah. I mean, talk about finances. Who's ever overspent consistently quite a bit without telling your spouse? You had an agreed-upon amount, maybe somebody opened a credit card or somebody gave money to someone and just continually there was just this, you know, money is going out without you two in agreement on that. So we've seen financial betrayal. We've seen, you know... sometimes I feel like priorities can betray our marriage in some ways.
- Ryan:** Oh, yeah.
- Selena:** Like, you and I said that we're going to hang out and now you're going to go off and do this. [0
- Ryan:** Fairly recently something like that happened. We made plans with the best of intentions, and I was like, what the heck, man? I'll just fall on the sword, so to speak. That's the wrong way to put it. I betrayed your trust recently and it was with giving. Do you remember that?
- Selena:** Yes. Yes.
- Ryan:** So the way we do our giving as a little sidebar is we set automatically aside-
- Selena:** Giving is finances, tithes, and offerings, those kinds of things.
- Ryan:** Yes. Because we want to give sacrificially. We've talked about that in the past. So we've more or less automated this. But half of our giving goes automatically to our church and then the other half goes to kind of our... it's up to our discretion to para-church or any sort of ministry or community need. It doesn't have to be tax deductible. It can just be somebody who needs it. We had that money set aside to not be ours, to be used-
- Selena:** For God's kingdom.
- Ryan:** To serve our community in the name of glorifying God and drawing others unto Him. Well, I made a unilateral decision on the lion's share of this giving.
- Selena:** It was quite a bit, yeah.
- Ryan:** And I didn't even consult my wife. And you took issue with that. You initially thought, boy, are you hiding because you're afraid I was going to push back?
- Selena:** Well, because the, yeah, because what we were giving to is already kind of a little iffy of subject for us. We are in full agreement on the bigger things around this institution. But then there's some things that are working themselves out that we've had to work through in our marriage. And so he's like, well, I've

already given this much, so I need to move this money. And I'm like, "I'm sorry, wait, what? You gave how much for what?" What? Usually, we talk about this. And not that he needs my permission. He doesn't actually need my permission. But we need to have some unity and agreement around that giving because he's robbing me of the blessing to be able to acknowledge and know that, awesome, we're giving to this institution. But also, yeah, it's like, are you hiding this? This is not like you.

Ryan: You said... I don't know if you meant this the way it sounded. You go, "It's a red flag." And I was like, "A red flag to what? Like, do you think that I'm wanting to?" I mean, we've already hashed through this. I just completely spaced and in giving and I spaced in letting you know.

Selena: Right. Which, you know, it's still betrayal.

Ryan: Which has not happened before.

Selena: Yeah, because it was unintentional. But it's like this is just how trust works in marriage. Right. It's so tricky. You spend all this time building it up and it's there and it's just like... it's like when a rock hits your windshield or something, just damage right there. Just starts happening, you know? And you're like, oh, man, now I have to go spend time and do this. Betrayal just shatters everything that you have worked for and have built. It compromises it.

Ryan: It's a good analogy because if you don't deal with that rock chip, what does it do?

Selena: It compromises the integrity of your windshield.

Ryan: And you can't see pretty clearly.

Selena: Absolutely, you cannot.

Ryan: Pretty soon you can't see clearly.

Selena: So, yeah. Talking about betrayal, you know, we don't want to make light of infidelity or emotional affairs. Those are things, unfortunately, that happen often in marriage. We just also want to highlight that there are other ways that betrayal creeps up in marriage.

Ryan: Here's other ones as well. I'll talk to the men. If you've not led well, if you've not been the spiritual head of your home, if you've made poor decisions in your leadership that have damaged your lives in some way, not... So it could be you took a chance on some sort of career choice or some sort of investment

or you've never led your household in devotions or family worship and that's starting to take its toll on your kids. They're not learning what they need to be learning about the things of God. Your wife is not a well-watered vine. She's not flourishing because you're not watering. Now, she can go to the word on her own, but that's going to take a toll if the husband's not leading.

Selena: So how is that a betrayal issue?

Ryan: You've betrayed your role as the husband, as the head of the home. When you stepped into that covenant, that's what you signed up for.

Selena: That's good.

Ryan: So a wife, I think, who is kind of waking up to the fact that, oh, my husband's not leading us, I think she has a right to feel betrayed or maybe at least bait and switched or maybe to feel like there's something missing at a minimum. Because when you got married, maybe she didn't realize that that was the order of things.

Selena: There could be addictions involved. Not just pornography addictions, but like drug addictions. Maybe there was something in the past and you got married and it was resolved and now it's hidden again and then it rears its ugly head and here you are dealing with an addiction that is sometimes outside of your own abilities to deal with.

Ryan: A final category I'll just bring up is in-laws. If you are siding with your in-laws to the detriment of your marriage, if you're letting them speak in a toxic way and you've talked about it and you've said, these are boundaries we need to have in place because otherwise it's going to hurt us. We've talked about this in the past. But boundaries keep bad things out, they also keep good things in. But if someone who's failed to seal off their side of the boundary and it's causing damaging things to get in and good stuff to get out, that can lead to feelings of betrayal as well.

Selena: Yeah, absolutely.

Ryan: And that's really difficult if you have really meddlesome in-laws. They have lots of opinions and they want to be involved.

Selena: In-laws are any family members that are just kind of meddly and nosy and, you know, you have to cut them off every family get-together and just redirect the conversation.

Ryan: So real quick, we mentioned the Gottmans. They had an article that talks about trust and betrayal. And here's what they observed. They said, What we found was that the number one most important issue that comes up, to couples that they had interviewed and gathered data around, number one issue is around trust and betrayal.

So he said, "I started to see their conflicts like a fan opening up and every region of the fan was a different area of trust." So here's some questions that they posed that reveal some of these areas of the trust fan, if you will. Can I trust you to be there and listen to me when I'm upset? If you can't go to your spouse and you feel like it's always Russian roulette, you don't know if they're going to go off or not, that's a sense of feeling you can't trust.

Selena: Or I mean, we're talking about triage or, you know, the bomb has been dropped, something has been confessed, you don't feel like you can trust them and go to them. I mean, this is the discussion, you know? Are you still able to honor your spouse in not being able to go to them? So there's a way I think to, yeah, can I trust you to be there and listen? And in the middle of the triage, there's still a way to honor your spouse, to respect your spouse, to love your spouse without sinning.

Ryan: Another line of questioning is can I trust you to choose me over your mother or over your friends? Can I trust you to work for our family and not in spite of our family? Can I trust you to not take drugs? Can I trust you to not cheat on me and be sexually unfaithful? Can I trust you to help me with the things around the house? I mean, do you want to unpack that?

Number one issue in marriage is communication. Number two, chores. [Selena laughs] I'm not kidding. Like the economies of the home. And, of course, that cascades down from communication. But if you have this constant feeling that you can't trust your spouse to pull their weight, so to speak. We're not talking about roles but like... okay, so let's just go there. All right.

Let's talk about roles. Husband outside of the house-

Selena: We're going.

Ryan: Husband is outside the house earning, the wife's making the home. She's a stay-at-home mom. Two ways that can be trusted. Husband comes home to chaos. The home is not a place of peace and warmth. It's not a place that's a nurturing, warm home place.

Selena: And there can be messes and there can be signs of life and there's a nurturing. I hate to say spirit. But there's a nurturing culture around that, right? There's

a home life that can be beautiful that has a few messes here and there. But it's the chaos, it's the yelling, it's the heart orientation that's behind it that will determine it.

Ryan: And it's clear that the children have not been disciplined, they've not been taught, they've not been instructed, they've not been given boundaries or those boundaries have not been enforced. I'm not trying to subtext you right now.

Selena: I'm like, well.

Ryan: Listen-

Selena: I'm gone, guys. Peace out.

Ryan: There's a very real sense that this stuff-

Selena: But who's the head?

Ryan: To take that example, there's an instance where the chaos is there, but it's being dealt with, and there's also an instance where the chaos is there and it's been let to flourish. Those are two entirely different situations. So a husband can come home and feel like-

Selena: I can't trust you to manage our household, basically.

Ryan: Yeah. When I've effectively given that to you and I'm trusting that you'll take care of it.

Selena: You're not subduing it.

Ryan: And so if you don't do that, that is a sense of betrayal. Now, to flip it on the husband.-

Selena: Garbage?

Ryan: If I go and I fail to have-

Selena: Garbage cans. [laughs]

Ryan: Keeping it on chores. I had a meeting early in the morning, I forgot to take the garbage cans out. I texted you. You got to get the garbage cans out. And you said something like a gift or something. And you were like... you had attitude, I think.

Selena: I did.

Ryan: And then later on you apologized. Like, I'm sorry for the attitude about the garbage. And I was like, "It's totally fine." I was like, "That's my fault. That's man's work. I should have done that for you." You shouldn't be... Because they're heavy. [laughs]

Selena: Well, they're heavy and I have to strap on the baby because she'll just cry if I have to walk out, like be two feet away from her. It's just kind of a... I can do it and I will do it.

Ryan: But I apologize because that's something that you trust me to do-

Selena: I do.

Ryan: ...and I didn't do it.

Selena: I'm a big strong man.

Ryan: And I have it on my list, I just missed it. That's a funny one. But if I lack ambition in the workplace and I'm not trying to go and get hunting, gather, so to speak, regardless of the profession. But if I get fired and don't get another job or if I'm neglecting my duties at my job and that leads to me getting fired. You trust me to make sure that there's enough money in the account for our family to eat, to have a place to sleep, to have heat in the house.

Selena: Running water.

Ryan: You trust me to do that.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: If I didn't do that over a period of time, you'd have a hard time trusting that I could do that, and that would create all sorts of issues downstream in our marriage.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So here's some more quick questions. I'm not sure if I said this one yet. I'm going to say it again. Can I trust you to respect me? Can I trust you to really be involved with our children and not just get home and check out with them?

So betrayal in these areas on a consistent basis leads you to one or two responses: Panic or denial. Now, what do you mean by panic? Where you say, "I'm done?"

Selena: Just hyperaware, move quickly, move harshly. That would probably be me in our relationship. "I'm done. I'm done." So I'm just going to go, you know, rage clean or whatever and I'm done. And denial would be more of an internal response. So the panic response is an external response. Denial is more internal. Passivity, refusing to acknowledge the depth of the situation. You know, denying that this is even happening. I don't know. Just moving on.

Ryan: Right. Right. There's a thousand ways to paint it, but it's an enabling of it. It's a not dealing with it. It's a turning a blind eye because it's too hard to deal with the fact that I don't actually trust my spouse.

Selena: Right. And when betrayal happens, these are like two of the most immediate responses, right, is you're hurt, so therefore you panic or you deny. And or you deny.

Ryan: And of course that immediate moment could be the moment you realize it. And that's something that's been happening over time. So here's what we want to encourage you is that there's a strength to your covenant and then it's not jump ship. So you might feel like you have good reason to jump ship. We use this analogy a while back. There's this past in our areas called deception pass. It's this really beautiful high current area on the Puget Sound, which is a body of water.

If you're going through something like that, you're going through a storm and you're trying to figure out how to navigate the storm, it's not safe for you to jump out of the ship into that storm. So what we're trying to show you is stay in the ship. Learn to navigate the storm. Learn to work the tools at your disposal, you know, whatever in terms of communication, in terms of intimacy, in terms of just talking through it.

Selena: Well, I'm amazed at when betrayal happens, how quickly the enemy is just darting all those thoughts. Yeah, you should get divorced. You should do this. He's done this to you. You don't deserve any of this. Like you should blah, blah, blah. And it's like, if there's any time to be having our armor from the Lord on, it's that time, right? Of protecting ourselves from the arrows and the thoughts of the enemy and anything that would attack us. And to get on our knees and to cry out to the Lord and pray to him and say, God, what is your will for me in this situation? Like, my trust with my husband has been broken. There's been betrayal. I am hurt and I don't know how to take the next step.

So you're on your knees. You are asking the Lord to lead you as a wife in this. We talk about this and we mentioned it kind of above, like, can you still respect your husband if he's betrayed your trust in those moments? And what does that look like? I mean, the Bible, we are supposed to respect our husband. It doesn't give you any caveats.

Ryan: This is a touchy topic, but let's go there. We're going there.

Selena: We're going there because when it's important to recognize this, I think as Christians.

Ryan: As Christians, if you say God's word is authoritative in your life, you have to look at this passage where Paul says, Wives, respect your husband.

Selena: Not just when the water is smooth.

Ryan: The respect is due to the station of husband. Now, if he's not standing guard as he should, there's a sense in which you don't trust the man, but you respect the role.

Selena: Right. And so what does that look like?

Ryan: Well, 1 Corinthians 13, love hopes all things. I'm not going to just grow bitter. I'm not going to bash. I'm not going to let my-

Selena: Go to my friends and just chatty, chatty, chatty.

Ryan: Now you can process and go to your pastor and get counsel. We're not trying to say don't do that. But there's a very different heart orientation toward obeying the Lord in the stations of marriage that He's put in place.

Selena: Well, and trusting his word to do what it's going to do when you trust what He says. Right? When trust has been betrayed, when something's been broken in our marriage, I know that there's going to be this moment of bombs going off. I know there's going to be an emotionally charged moment. I know that everything's going to just be wanting to come out of my mouth and all the things. If you know that's going to happen... we're telling you, we're sitting here telling you that's going to happen. You are going to feel those things. Don't respond. Don't give into the enemy. Stand up and stay fierce and fight that urge, right, to just fly off the handle with all your words. That is exercising self-control. That is the Holy Spirit at work in you producing fruit.

Know that it will pass. That it's not forever. The moment that you are feeling is not forever. And your feelings need to be under the Lordship of Christ in

that moment. So when you're acknowledging this is the hard moment, which is what we're talking about today is betrayal has happened, you're in this triage moment, acknowledge it.

But we're going to tell you next week and we're telling you right now to set the stage, it's not always going to be like that. And you don't have to live sinfully and live in a way that you're going to regret and you're just going to continue to chip away and damage your marriage even more. And I say this because you are still called to respect your husband even if he's betrayed your trust.

How do I respect my husband when he's betrayed me on whatever level? I can't grow bitter towards him. I have to forgive him. I have no choice. Christ has forgiven me so much. I have to forgive. It might take some time. That's God's goodness and grace working itself out in your own heart and soul. It means I'm not going to go gossip and grumble and complain to my friends about my husband. There's probably some hurt that I might need to ask for prayer for, but you have to be under control in what you... in your words and in your actions towards your husband in order to live obediently to Christ when he says in the words of Paul, respect your husband.

Ryan: Notice how we're not saying you need to immediately trust your husband or your wife if you've been betrayed or a trust has been broken. But you do need to, like you say, respect. Husbands, if your wife betrays you, you're not off the hook for loving her. Paul says to husbands, Love your wife. How? The "how" is really important. As Christ loved the church.

Have you loved Christ perfectly? Does Christ have reason to stop loving you because you've sinned against... you betrayed his trust? Well, He doesn't betray you, does He? We're saying let the covenant be what it was designed to be. Let it be the safe place that the strong scaffolding, the structure, the foundation, whatever you want to call it, the thing that's going to keep you together while you get through that storm.

And what you're saying is do the actions of love and the feelings of love will follow. Now, as Christians, we're not called to feel love. We're called to act lovingly. And we do so in faith, trusting that love will produce good fruit. Trusting that if it doesn't produce good fruit in my heart, my spouse's heart, it'll produce good fruit in mine as I obey unto Christ, not unto man.

Selena: That's walking in the spirit.

Ryan: That's walking in the spirit. That's walking faithfully, not faithlessly. And that's what we're encouraging you to do in the moment of your deepest, most

visceral hurt, visceral pain. When you want to throw your phone out the car window because you're hearing us say these things, we're saying that, friends, this is what faith is. This is what trusting the Lord is. And that's why we said at the beginning, we are not just telling you... this is Ryan and Selena's opinion. This is not the Gottman's opinion. This is not some... This is what God has given us to place our faith into. And that's what faith in action looks like.

So, we've talked about what betrayal is. We've talked about the role covenant plays in weathering the storms of betrayal and rebuilding trust. But now, how do we deal with the sin that's actually happened? It's one thing to recognize the waters you're swimming in, but how do you deal with the sin that leads to betrayal?

Well, the answer is repentance and reconciliation. Now, what does the Bible tell us about sin, repentance, and reconciliation? Let's talk about that next. So, big headline, dealing with sin. You've been sinned against. I think Selena, in our pre-talk, you said you need to have permission to acknowledge that you have been sinned against. Sin has infected your marriage on some level. You need to acknowledge that.

And if you're the one who has sinned, yes, acknowledge that, but don't end it there. Repent of it.

Selena: Repent to the Lord clearly first, and then you go to your spouse.

Ryan: Now, this is the thing that's really often glossed over is that repentance itself, true repentance is in itself a grace from God for you to see the sin for what it is and to... I'll use this word, to hate it, to want to kill it, to want to turn from it. That in itself is evidence of God's grace. Oftentimes we say the grace of God is when I repent to Him, He gives me forgiveness.

Selena: No.

Ryan: But don't overlook the fact that repentance itself, a contrite heart, a heart that wants to make things right, that is a grace of God in itself. So keep going. If you're feeling the urge to repent, do it. Don't let the enemy trick you into not repenting because of pride or because of fear or because of shame. Don't let the process end there. Repent of it.

Now, if you're the one that's been sinned against, you might just need to hear this. You have permission to be hurt or angry. It's not a sin to be angry. What Selena was talking about earlier was absolutely, in your anger, you can sin.

Selena: But you should not sin.

- Ryan:** But you should not.
- Selena:** The Bible says, Do not sin in your anger.
- Ryan:** Right. See how they're different? Anger and sin are separate, but they can easily be like a train going down the rails, coupled together. And it's not a sin to be distrusting. We mentioned that earlier. So you need to acknowledge that you might be hurt, you might be angry, and it's okay if you don't trust your spouse at the moment, but don't let it stop there.
- Selena:** Have faith Have faith that the trust will be rebuilt when you take the right steps.
- Ryan:** That's good. So how do we deal with this biblically? Let's read a passage. This comes from Matthew 18, starting in verse 15. Selena, would you read that?
- Selena:** Yeah. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
- Ryan:** I'm going to read another passage here. This is Luke 17, starting in verse 3 to verse 4. "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."
- Okay, just a few themes in these two scriptures. And it's simply this. We don't have an option to not forgive if someone's coming to repent to us.
- Selena:** Yeah, we have to rightfully understand forgiveness.
- Ryan:** Matthew says, "If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." If you go and rebuke somebody and they say, "You're right," you don't get to keep rebuking. You get to say, "Oh, well, okay."
- Selena:** You get to be grateful for the response and you get to move forward in a better, more godly relationship.

Ryan: If your brother sins, rebuke him. This is in Luke. If he repents, then forgive him. So what happens if he repents and you say, "You know what, come back to me in two weeks because pal, you really got it coming. You're going to sleep in the doghouse, on the couch for the next... you know, I got to make sure that I get my pound of flesh," then friend, you're sinning. So, if he repents, forgive him.

Now, again, we have to use a scalpel in this because there's so many connotations that can happen. It doesn't mean that you trust him. It doesn't mean that everything acts as if nothing happened. But it does mean you no longer hold the sin against them.

Selena: Honestly, and clearly working towards reconciliation and forgiveness.

Ryan: But the command to the Christian is to offer forgiveness as a return for repentance. You must forgive him is what it says in Luke 17:4. So, in summary, when we're sinned against, how do we deal with it?

Selena: When betrayal has happened, when trust has been broken in your marriage, how are we commanded to deal with it?

Ryan: Number one, with honesty. With honesty. Call it what it is and deal with it head-on. So many couples fail to do one or both of those things. They either don't call it what it is, they enable the ongoing dysfunction, or they don't deal with it head-on.

Selena: You know, the verse that talks about how it is for freedom that he set us free. When we don't forgive, when we don't deal with the situation honestly, we aren't calling sin what sin is and what has happened, we're not dealing with it, then we're only contributing to the weight that is just crushing us little by little. Like death by a thousand cuts for our marriage. Right? Call it what it is. Then you can properly deal with it, with scripture, with pastors, with whoever you need that the Lord has provided you with. You go to them and you deal with this head-on.

And I promise you, friend, there's freedom in that. There's lightness. There's hope. There's joy. There's "I can do this. God has given... He's equipped me. He's strengthened me." It's way better to deal with it than to sweep it under the rug. I promise you.

Ryan: And you may be thinking, "I don't think so." And that's where the faith comes in.

Selena: Right. Trust in God.

Ryan: Because those are promises of God. That's not just Selena saying, By my experience, it's better. No, this is a promise of God that you can trust in. So we deal with it with honesty. We deal with it with humility. Here's what I mean by that is you also are not perfect. The same blood from Christ that saved you, saves your spouse.

Selena: But Ryan, my sin wasn't as big as his sin.

Ryan: All sins are damnable sins.

Selena: Yes. We are all-

Ryan: Now, not all consequences are the same, clearly. But in terms of holding a moral high ground or holding as the judge, jury, executioner, holding all three of those roles in a marital relationship, that's not for you to hold. So we need to be humble before the Lord, humble, seeing our sin for what it is laid bare before the perfect and loving Savior that Christ is, having given us His grace.

Selena: This is why the gospel is so foundational to marriage.

Ryan: You can't do that if you've never experienced grace, if you've never come face to face with your own sin and repented. So with honesty, with humility... and this one is so huge too, but with help... All three of them have Hs. So there you go. Honesty, humility, and help. And what we mean by that is that you are not an island unto yourself. You were called to be a part of the body of Christ, the bride of Christ. If you are not in a local church, find one. For the love of God, literally, find one. Because you cannot love Christ and neglect his bride. That's just not something believers get to do. And it's not just because the bride needs you. It's because you need the bride. It's because God knows that's how you will be sanctified. That's how you will be helped in moments like these. You have a shepherd who has is eternally accountable for your soul in some way, who will walk alongside you.

And then what's your role in that exchange? It's to do these other things: be honest and be humble before your shepherds and deal with it together, walking in the Spirit, walking out love in covenant.

Selena: Well, and trusting that even this, right? In Romans, he works all things for the good of those who love him. God works in all things, even betrayal, even when trust is broken. He's working all things. He uses affliction. He uses the darkness to make the light shine brighter, to sharpen us, to sanctify us, to correct us, because He is a loving Father who disciplines His children. It's unloving for Him to leave us in our sin.

Ryan: So one last big caveat said succinctly, and then we'll pray, is that our premise here is that an intact, reconciled marriage is always going to be God's best. It's God's design for flourishing. And the big question, the big elephant in the room right now — gorilla in the room? I don't know, Whatever — is what about divorce? Are there biblical grounds for divorce? And the straight answer to that is yes, there are biblical grounds for divorce. But it's never ideal. It's always the concession. And I'm telling you, it's always better to fight through it and not go around it.

Now it takes two. So if you find yourself fighting and there's no one else fighting alongside you, you have a much more difficult battle. That's why you need help. And that's why we don't want to speak too broadly to any specific situation in this podcasting context, because you really need to be pastored by someone who knows you, who's accountable to God for you, who can speak to you honestly, face to face, eye to eye, can read your body language, your expressions and that of your spouse.

The big premise here is that intact, reconciled marriage, always better. If you're just looking for a reason, an excuse to get a divorce, you're asking the wrong questions.

Selena: You're already on the wrong premise, the wrong foundation.

Ryan: I mean, we just encourage you gently to back away from that, back away from that ledge, and consider-

Selena: Gently? Just back away.

Ryan: Okay, well. Yes, back away from the ledge if you've gotten there too hastily. So-

Selena: Next week.

Ryan: Next week, repairing trust.

Selena: So we've talked about you've been betrayed, you're in triage, all of these things are kind of happening around you, now, what are some of the first steps that you start taking moving forward to begin repairing trust and begin repairing your covenant and your relationship?

Ryan: And regaining that sense of closeness.

Selena: Yes. And unity.

Ryan: And unity. That being said, we've mentioned components of the gospel throughout this whole thing. And the primary one is that you're a sinner and you need grace. Now, what do you need grace from? Well, you need grace from the holy, just, righteous God who, friends, has every right to not give you grace to let the full weight of the law bear itself on you and crush you. He has that right.

He's holy. We are not. We are creation. He is creator. He's not accountable to us. We are accountable to Him. And so that's what grace is, is that you have been given the perfection of God Himself by way of His incarnate son, Jesus Christ. I'm using big words. Incarnate son, Jesus Christ. He became flesh. He lived a perfect life. He died the sinner's death, a wrong death. He didn't stay dead. He conquered death because He was perfect, because He was God. He wasn't just a man. Fully God, fully man. He was resurrected.

And He says, if you believe in me, He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and if you want to come to the Father, you have to go through Me. And that "Me" is Jesus Christ. So we want you to know Jesus because He's the only way to the Father.

If you don't know who He is, talk to a friend who's a Christian, say, can you show me Jesus? Can we read the Bible together? Find a church that preaches out of the Bible. Not a church that tickles your ears, not a church... even I would say, even get away from the ones that are all about the topical sermon series. Instead, just preach through the Bible. Find a church that does that. If you can't find either of those things, we have a website that might help. Go to this website. It's thenewsisgood.com.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for covenant. Thank You for Your grace. I pray for the couples listening to this that it would bless them. I pray that they would find a way through the storm, that they would not give up if they feel like giving up. Lord, help them. Lord, help give them peace, give them hope that the sunshine is not far off. It's through the storm. I pray that they would see that with eyes of faith and they would act accordingly. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Amen. Amen. Well, I'm looking forward to next week because of repairing trust. I think that'll be a fun one. That'll be a fun one. I feel like I need to mention at the end of this episode, but if you want to partner with us, that's one of the main ways that God has been gracious to provide for the Frederick household. We get to do this work because of listeners like you and viewers

like you — sounds like PBS commercial — who has said, Hey, this mission's important. It's helped us. We want to help it. If that's you, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. We'd be honored to have your partnership in what we call the Fierce Fellowship. But if not, you're still welcome.

Lord willing, we will show up here next week to do this week in and week out because God is good and we want to help you. So with that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: We'll see you again in about seven days. Until then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Matthew 18:15-20
 - Luke 17:3-4

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

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