

REPAIRING TRUST AFTER IT'S BROKEN (TRUST AND BETRAYAL 3 OF 5)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/repairing-trust-after-its-broken-trust-and-betrayal-3-of-5>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Trust truly is the foundation of every healthy relationship, every healthy marriage.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So the past few weeks we've talked about defining trust, we've talked about dealing with broken trust in that moment of impact, right, when something has happened.

Well, how do you go about rebuilding? How do you begin the conversations when the pain is still very real, when the distrust is still very real and the reasons for your distrust are still clear and present? How do you go about rebuilding?

Well, you have to start somewhere. And so this may be the place for you to start because we're going to give you actually five really tangible ways to begin rebuilding trust in your marriage. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:41] <music>

Selena: Hi there, welcome to Fierce Marriage. I'm Selena. This is my husband, Ryan.

Ryan: Greetings.

Selena: We are the voices and people behind Fierce Marriage and all things fierce. All things.

Ryan: Everything that's ever been fierce.

Selena: Everything. We're just going to claim it.

Ryan: TM. TM. [Selena laughs]

Selena: We are in a series talking about trust in marriage and what to do when trust is broken. We talked about betrayal last week. We're excited to get into some tangible steps on how to get started on rebuilding trust.

But before we do that, we just wanted to introduce ourselves, which we've already done.

Ryan: If you're new to the podcast, our whole approach is this. We want to share openly, transparently. We've been doing that since... I don't know. We've been doing this ministry for over 10 years now.

Selena: 2013. No.

Ryan: I don't know where we started. I do know if I look, if I think about it, yeah, 2013. Listen, we don't have all the answers, but we do know the one who has the answers. His name is Jesus Christ. And so everything that we talk about is going to be in light of who He is and in light of what he's done in our own lives, in our own marriage.

We don't pretend to have the answers from Ryan and Selena. However, we have been married almost 21 years and I actually still love my wife. I still like you.

Selena: Yeah. We've been given this gift of a godly marriage.

Ryan: It didn't fall from the sky.

Selena: No.

Ryan: But it has been something that's we've built.

Selena: I'm just saying it's a fruit. There's been fruitfulness. There's been just the blessing of, you know, obeying God's word and kind of bringing our best even when it always falls short. God is just so faithful. And so we just want to share, I think, transparently what God has done in our own hearts and our lives and ultimately point you to the gospel.

Ryan: Yeah. And this is kind of one of those topics where, thankfully, we don't have a lot of experience. We've never walked through this sort of betrayal that many couples write in about. That doesn't mean we have a perfect marriage. We've had to deal with other versions. And we've talked about different ways that you can experience betrayal in your marriage besides an affair, emotional or physical.

To that end, because we don't have firsthand experience, we actually interviewed a couple. If you haven't listened to it, it's two episodes back. It's Chris and Stephanie Teague. They have an amazing story. Go ahead, check that out. Hear their testimony.

Actually, go back to episode 100, if you can find that on our podcast. That's where we did a longer interview with them a couple years ago.

Selena: Well, and I think that because we haven't, you know, experienced deep betrayal with one another, I think the flip side of that is that we have experienced deep trust with one another. That's a well that we would like to share from. You know, that although, yes, you have to walk through hard things, you know, we've walked through our share of external conflict and brokenness and things, God grows you in different ways.

And I think He gives you those gifts and those seasons of growth in order not just to have for yourselves and to put on the shelf and say, yeah, wow, look what God did. But you should always be sharing with others. The scriptures tell us to testify.

So we are here, hopefully, to encourage you and to testify about the goodness of working to repair trust when you don't feel like repairing trust, the goodness that comes and the fruitfulness that comes when you are faithful to God's word, to trust Him, to trust His promises, to stand on them and not just do the thing, but to actually believe them and walk faithfully in the light.

Ryan: That's good. Very quickly, let's orient ourselves in this series. Whether you've been following along for the whole series or not, this is where we are.

We started out week one. By the time it's done, I think it'll end up being about six weeks long. So week one was we defined trust. We talked about cruciform trust. We trust God, we trust His ways, and that helps us trust one another in a godly way.

Second week, we took a little break and did an interview. That's the Chris and Stephanie Teague interview.

Last week we talked about triage in that moment of impact. Like I said earlier, when you're still kind of bleeding, you need to stop the bleeding.

Selena: The bomb's been dropped, there's been a betrayal, a breach of trust.

Ryan: Right. What do you do? How do you respond in that moment?

Today we're talking about repairing trust, rebuilding trust. Next week we'll talk about maintaining trust, creating a culture of trust in your marriage.

And then the final week, we're going to do a Q&A. We're already getting some good questions. So if you have a question, we are collating, gathering,

earmarking those to hopefully address as many of those as we can in about 30 to 45 minutes, that final week.

So here's what we need you to do. If you have a question that has to do with trust, rebuilding trust, dealing with broken trust, betrayal, those sorts of things, write in to fiercemarriage.com/ask. That's A-S-K. There's three ways you can do it. You can fill out a form right there on the internet. You can call in. There's a number you can dial like the good old days, you leave a voicemail that transcribes it for us and we get it that way. Or you can text in.

Here's my recommendation if you want to have your question read and talked about. Keep it short. Just do your best to keep it short. I know these are complex situations, but if we're trying to cover a lot of questions, we're going to favor the ones that give us more time to do more questions as opposed to reading a long story.

Selena: Yeah. We'll do our best to pick out the themes and bigger questions that we know will be popular and want to be asked by others.

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: So yes.

Ryan: Okay. We're going to jump all the way down. We're going to pass all the recap from the previous weeks. If you want that content, go back and listen to those episodes.

Today, repairing trust. Repairing trust. So here's who I have in mind as we start this discussion. I'm thinking about the husband who has just realized that his wife has been talking to a coworker on social media. They've been texting.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: An emotional affair is beginning and he somehow discovers this and he's devastated. He no longer trusts his wife as she goes off to work. He no longer trusts her when she's scrolling on her phone at home. He no longer trusts her when he's not actually communicating with her, right? Because he feels like she could be communicating with this other friend, you know, or other things could develop from that.

I'm also thinking of the wife who has discovered her husband's web browsing history or caught her husband doing pornography or in a similar situation to the husband and the wife, I've mentioned previously, you know, she's caught him messaging women. She's caught him looking at women. You know, he has

wandering eyes. She's caught him, you know, in whatever capacity. That's what I have in mind.

That's a little bit deeper. Now, it's still emotionally devastating to say... say I had a gambling problem and I was gambling at night and you didn't know where I was. I said I was at work and I was at work late, but really I'm going off to the casino or whatever. Or I'm gambling on sports or whatever. I don't gamble so I don't really know how to go to the gamble store. [laughs] But you find out I've wasted our life savings.

So like where you thought we were saving for X, now you realize I've taken that selfishly, broken your trust, and hurt us in the process. Maybe it's a college fund for the kids or a house fund. I don't think we're going to send our kids to college the way things are going, [laughing] but if it's a house fund for them to get a start in their married days or whatever.

I mean, can you think of any other examples? Am I missing anything?

Selena: Yeah, no, I think the financial, I think the emotional, I think of addictions, like hidden addictions, anything that would just shatter your reality that you thought you were living in would be under that category.

Ryan: So with that kind of situation, those situations in mind, where do you begin repairing? Well, first off, walking out of betrayal is not something you do just kind of...

Selena: Nonchalantly.

Ryan: Nonchalantly. Right. It's more than that, right?

Selena: Right. Right. I mean, last week we talked about how betrayal... you have to acknowledge the sin. You have to acknowledge that you've been sinned against or that you have sinned against your spouse. And so once that has been acknowledged, once you both have said, "Okay, this is where we're at. This is the situation we've uncovered all the things. There's nothing else to search out or to talk about or to look through, we are now here at this point, we are at this fork and we..." ideally, we pray that God is leading you to fight for your marriage and that you're here wanting to repair trust or God forbid, you're saying, nope, we're done.

And we're here to say, don't be done. Don't be done. Sit here. Let's talk about this. Let's take those first steps, steps forward of walking out of betrayal. And it is not just a nonchalant walk. It's not just, okay, here's what we're going to do now. Here's what, you know... the doer in one of you, right, the one of you

as a doer is going to say, Okay, here's what we're going to do. We're going to read our Bibles. We're going pray, We're gonna do all the things. And it's like, yes, yes. And amen.

But there is a sense that your duty needs to be done, but is your heart in it? Is your soul in it? Are you focused...? What is the objective here? We talk about living in the light. We talk about walking in faith. Well, getting your trust broken with your spouse is going to require faith.

Ryan: I think I really want to emphasize what you just said, maybe with just different words is we don't walk faithlessly. We don't do it because, oh, Ryan and Selina said, or you just kind of know the marriage should be probably salvaged. No.

We walk boldly with faith, trusting that when we stand on God's word, it will produce, will not return void. Right? That's a faithful way to walk as opposed to the faithless way. I know that sometimes I can find myself going through the actions, going through the motions faithlessly, not placing consciously my trust in God.

Selena: I still think there's some fruit to be had, but I honestly like where we are walking faithfully... Well, the fruit to be had is God's faithfulness, you know, on behalf of our faithlessness.

Ryan: And that faithfulness comes through sanctification. It comes through all the things that He gives to us. And I will say this. Walking itself is faith. So as opposed to just wallowing in it and then eventually kind of letting it destroy you, taking steps forward is, you can't do that faithlessly.

Selena: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ryan: Okay. So here's some big premises. That's the biggest one is that we do this in light of who God is, what He said. But some big premises that kind of bolster that I'll say, and they need to be in place before you begin the actions. Like I said, at the beginning, we're going to give you five really tangible ways to begin really rebuilding trust. But they can't be built on nothing. Right. They have to be built on a foundation.

And here they are very quickly. Number one, the lion's share of both your trust is in God. Both of you.

Selena: Right. This is that cruciform trust.

Ryan: Both of you. In other words, both of you believe that marriage is good. Both of you believe that the best path forward is reconciliation. You're not just

throwing a Hail Mary. You're actually planning to drive the ball down the field yard by yard by yard.

Selena: Right. You believe it and you desire it, I think is what we're saying too.

Ryan: So your trust in the Lord looks like that. You believe marriage is good. You believe that it can actually be regained, that when you act faithfully, that trust can be rebuilt and regiven and that forgiveness is effective and complete when it's given in light of Christ. Forgiveness accomplishes something.

You need to believe and understand and press into that truth. So, in other words, you're both leaning in to Christ through this process. That's number one big premise.

The number two big premise based on the above is that you both are in it and in it for the same thing. And that is full reconciliation.

Selena: You both desire with all of your being. You want reconciliation. It can't just be one of you. You can't build trust with someone who doesn't value your trust. You also can't build trust with someone who refuses to offer it albeit even just small increments.

But if we both want reconciliation, then we are both going to work toward and take whatever the small steps are to rebuild that trust because we value our covenant. We value what God says about it. We value being united and one, and we want to be together.

Ryan: Yeah. Trust that is regained is also trust that must be re-given. I can't gain your trust if you refuse to give it. If I don't want to gain your trust, then what trust do you have to give? So those things go hand in hand.

Then the final big premise here is that there's no silver bullet. There's no magic pill. There's nothing that-

Selena: But praise God for that. I mean, we say that there's no shortcut. There's no easy way. I mean, if there was, we would miss out on the fruits along the way. We would miss out on seeing with our eyes God working and healing us and sanctifying us and bringing us together and building our persistence, producing in us, right, the perseverance and the patience and the fruit of His spirit.

So I say, praise God, there's no silver bullet, even though my flesh says, "Man, I wish there was a silver bullet so that we could just ease the pain, get back to where we were.

Ryan: I mean, best case scenario, you take a magic pill and you wake up in the morning, you both forget what's happened. What does that accomplish in your soul? What does that accomplish in terms of drawing you closer into God? It might relieve the pain right now, but no, God has more to accomplish.

Selena: It's not going to treat the infection.

Ryan: Not a single jot or tittle in the economy of the kingdom will go wasted. Not a single stroke of the pen is wasted in God's plan. So you must trust that. That's the first big thing that these big premises are talking about. It's all about trusting in God. Okay.

So those are the big premises. Now, what are the big questions that we're hoping to answer here? Again, we want to rebuild trust. The question is not, how do I just get my wife to trust me again? How do I get her to love me again? How do I get her to feel and show affection toward me again? Those questions matter.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: But the bigger question is simply this, how can I trust God in dealing with this? How can I be faithful to God and how I as a husband, you as a wife walk out my faith in this situation? How can I trust God with the situation? How can I trust God with my heart through it? How can I trust God with my spouse's heart through it? If our orientation is God, we want to honor you as opposed to just getting the things that you give. Do you see how that changes everything?

Selena: Trust is taking your hands off the wheel and letting go of some control. Your question of how do I get my... as a wife, how would I get my husband to just be affectionate towards me again, even though I broke his trust? How do I get that back?

Well, again, the question is not just to get what you want. The question is, how can I be obedient to God in this? What does God actually desire from me and from our relationship? And how is He trying to teach me through this situation?

Ryan: That's good. Okay. So we've covered big premises. We've covered big questions. I want to spend the rest of our time in these tangible steps. If you're a note taker, this would be the time when you'd be taking notes or if you're in the car, you're working out-

- Selena:** Don't take notes.
- Ryan:** ...you're doing chores, whatever it is you're doing, maybe just find one of these things that can be the thing that you for now hang your hat on. Again, here's a caveat. This journey is going to look different for everyone. You're going to have to keep your head on a swivel. It's not just A leads to B leads to C leads to... like you're going to have to journey.
- Selena:** The Holy Spirit can help you discern through each of these and when the next step is and what that's going to look like. So yeah, you said five tangible steps.
- Ryan:** Okay. So it's funny I said five tangible steps, but this first one feels intangible because it's like... the step is this: be humble. As I've said a few times on the podcast, I frequent X, formerly known as Twitter. And you know, you get into these debates and conversations and I've often wondered like, either I'm the most prideful person I know, or I'm the most humble person I know. It's like, how do you know if you're humble? You don't. A humble person doesn't even think about that sort of thing. Dang it. I'm prideful.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** So how can you force yourself to be humble? How do you humble yourself?
- Selena:** As well as Christian and believer. Right?
- Ryan:** What does the Bible say? It says, humble yourselves inside of the Lord and He will lift you up. Don't take the seat of the table by yourself, but instead let yourself be brought to the table. Being humble starts with seeing God as God and you as not God, Him as the one who is sovereign, powerful, good, loving, true over your situation, you as the one who is sitting under that goodness, sovereignty, power, and truth. That's where humility begins.
- Why do we say that? Because humility says, I'm not going to throw my spouse's betrayal in her face. Instead, I'm going to do the actions of love, which 1 Corinthians 13, everyone knows it. You probably had it read at your wedding.
- One of those things that we overlook is "love hopes all things". What does that even mean? It means that I'm expecting the best. I'm not always throwing nagging. I'm not rubbing your nose in it. Is that a posture of humility? It says, how dare you? Remember what you did? Sure, you may have apologized. Sure, you may have shown repentance, but I'm still hurting. Therefore my throwing it in your face is justified. Well, there's a parable about that. Matthew 18. I'm telling you, it doesn't... I believe it's Matthew 18. It's the parable of the servant who was indebted to the...

Selena: Matthew 18 is.. well, it was a long chapter though, too. I don't know how I was going to say that was the 77 times of forgiving.

Ryan: Well, that would apply too.

Selena: That would apply too. But yes, the parable of the servant who was brought to the-

Ryan: The unforgiving servant. He was forgiven his debt and then he went to go gather debt of his own. It was like a millionth of a fraction of what he owed and he's wringing out this guy's neck who owes him money. And the master found out and said, "You wicked servant." So that's like us holding each other's sin against us when our debt has been completely paid by Christ. That humbles you.

Selena: Well, I think, specifically speaking to a betrayal of trust and being humble, you know, if I am constant... you have to examine what you're going to say before you're going to say it. I mean, this is just generally speaking, I think. Bt what are you going to say? Why are you going to say it from what posture are you saying this?

Because I can filter through a lot of pride. I can filter through a lot of self-righteousness. I can filter through a lot of that by God's grace. I still have to seek wisdom from the scriptures because my feelings are going to be deceptive. They're going to still be running high. My emotions are going to indicate that things are wrong and that's good. God has created us that way. But they can't be in the control seat. So being humble is, again, another relinquishing of control to the Lord. It's a mission to him. It's an acknowledgment that he is the authority, I am not.

Yes, I've been wronged, yes, my emotions are running high, yes, I've been hurt, and yet God still calls me to love my spouse. He still calls me to honor, to give myself up for Him. Right? And in this, we can be hopeful. We can be hopeful in this.

Ryan: That's the second tangible step is being hopeful. I wanted to speak quickly to the humble side of the one who has broken the trust. If you're not humbled already by the fact that you've broken the trust in your marriage, take a hard look at your own heart. Humility then walks out that situation says, Listen, I get you have no reason to trust me," as opposed to saying, "Get over it. I said what needed to be said. You see my phone history now. Like get over it." Well, that's not a posture of humility either. So be humble.

- Selena:** Be humble.
- Ryan:** Whether you're the break trust breaker or the one whose trust has been broken.
- Selena:** I would say, go to the location of sin, right? So if it was a phone, if it was finances, or it was some sort of drug addiction, go to the source, open that door, and begin shedding light in there. Whatever that means.
- Ryan:** We're going to get there. That's another one of the tangible things.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** So be humble. Be hopeful. Well, this is very fast one. Be humble. Be hopeful. Decide and commit to being hopeful, optimistic, looking at the upside about your marriage, that God will be glorified in the midst of this. If you guys can agree on that, oh my word, you're like 80%, 90% of the way there. It's all about that heart orientation.
- Selena:** Yes. He's your heavenly father. He's also King and creator. So trust His promises. Trust His word. He's designed and purposed your marriage specifically for your good and for His glory.
- Ryan:** Very good. Number three. What's number three? Selena, you started talking about it a little bit.
- Selena:** Oh, commit to honesty. 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- Ryan:** ... King James.
- Selena:** Cleanseth.
- Ryan:** I copied and pasted that from-
- Selena:** Look at you.
- Ryan:** I knew the verse reference, but I couldn't remember the words. So I Googled 1 John 1:7. And I didn't even read it. I just copied and pasted it.
- Selena:** I like the little eth. Cleanseth.
- Ryan:** It cleanseth me.

- Selena:** It cleanseth me.
- Ryan:** Cleanseth us. Yeah. So you talked about transparency, going to the locus kind of the sin.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Well, that's their start. And we're going to talk about making a plan. And I'd say that's the first part of the plan is look very plainly at where this began and begin building out of that your path toward rebuilding trust.
- But that you can't do that without honesty, without transparency. We wrote a whole book on basically this verse. Like truly this verse and its implications for marriage. By the way, that book is called *See-Through Marriage*. I don't want to just say we had a book and I don't tell the title.
- Selena:** *See-Through Marriage*.
- Ryan:** *See-Through Marriage*. You can buy it wherever books are sold. We actually had... that book hit number two on all of them on all of Amazon. I'm not talking like just Christian marriage and dating. No. All of Amazon. Why? Because it was on sale for 47 cents.
- Selena:** Thank you, Lord. You know what? Praise God.
- Ryan:** I don't know how many copies we sold, but I'm guessing it was like 5,000 copies of that book.
- Selena:** I praise you, God.
- Ryan:** And that was published through our publisher. So we wrote a whole book on that. Check it out if you want to go deep into what transparency looks like. Because I think that on top of communication is like communication transparency, those two things are like power combination.
- Selena:** Power team.
- Ryan:** Power team. So what does it mean to walk in the light? Really quickly, just going through this passage. If we walk in the light, well, walk is action. You're not sitting. You're not waiting. You're not just marinating, but you're moving forward in the light. You're walking in a certain manner toward a certain end in a certain way. It's in light. It's not faithless.

And we walk in the light how? As He is in the... who's He? It's Christ. So as He is in the light. So we walk in Christ's capital T Truth. He says, "I am the way, the truth, the life." I have in here we walk according to Christ's version of the truth. Well, you know what Christ's version of the truth is? It's truth. I don't have my version and He has... No, truth is objective. He is the source of it. He is the outworking of it. We walk according to Him. Not just His truth, but Him. All right?

So what does that mean when we call sin what it is? We see sin in contrast to His perfect holiness. We call it what it is — Unholiness. It's rejection of God's laws, rejection of God's truth. It's a twisting of that which is meant for good and now it's turned into evil. That's what sin is. We repent of it. You already talked about this. If you haven't repented by the way, go ahead and do it. I mean that sincerely. Do repent. I mean, just turn away from it vocally in your actions and in your heart, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

And then walking in the light means we live with nothing to hide. Those who have nothing to hide, hide nothing. So that's what walking in the light looks like. If you're trusting me to regain your trust, but then I refuse to walk in the light with you, I refuse to expose whatever the area is where the distrust was broken. That's a phone bank record, social media, whatever-

Selena: Yeah. So disclosing all the information. And then I think, and maybe we're going to get to this, but also from what I understand, there's also a time where you're like, Okay, we're closing the door on this and we're moving forward.

Ryan: We'll get to the plan part.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: That does happen. Then the last part of this verse is as we walk in the light according to Christ's truth or truth himself, we cling to these promises of this passage, which is we will gain fellowship through this process. And we will also be cleansed of unrighteousness. Like if you have a sin that's habitual, I would encourage you instead of just thinking, how can I not do the sin, instead, think, I want to be righteous.

Selena: It's a virtue here instead of the vice.

Ryan: I want to honor my King as a worthy subject. And I'm using like kind of that archaic sort of language, but I want to be a man that walks in light of the King. I don't want to just walk arbitrarily and then kind of give a head nod over to Christ once in a while. I want to actually walk in allegiance to Him. Think about

that. You'll be cleansed of your sin as you walk in. And sometimes the cleansing comes externally. Sometimes it happens internally.

Selena: Sometimes you don't understand the weight of your sin until you've been cleansed of it. Right? You don't understand the weight that you've been living under and the heaviness and the darkness until it's been lifted and you're starting to walk in the brightness and goodness of the light.

Ryan: Oh boy, the freedom to be had-

Selena: Oh boy.

Ryan: For the soul that has been set free-

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: I'm telling you that there's beauty inside that [inaudible 00:26:57]. Like when you take that leap and it's devastatingly scared, wow, what a beautiful thing to participate in, to see.

Number four. So what are the three tangible things? All right. We're saying, be humble, be helpful, commit to honesty. That's number three. Walking in the light.

Number four is communicate throughout this process. Big, big topic. We've written books on this as well. *How A Husband Speaks, How A Wife Speaks*. Those are our bestselling books to date in terms of the first 12 months they've been released.

Selena: For their actual price, not for 50 cents. [both laughs]

Ryan: I think they've resonated. I think they've struck a chord with some people. And they will kind of give you tangible ways to communicate well as husbands and as wives. So *How A Husband Speaks, How A Wife Speaks*.

But here's what that might look like as you're communicating through this address. So obviously you've talked about it, there's been repentance. There's been a, okay, our marriage has been damaged, we need to repair it. That's obviously the first communication. We're agreeing now based on those three premises that we want this together. I will fight for you. You will fight for me. We will fight in light of Christ. Now, what do we do?

So as we're walking, going about our lives, we're communicating through it, how? We're addressing issues promptly. The snappy little phrase, address and confess.

Selena: Address and confess.

Ryan: Be quick to apologize, fast to forgive. So the longer you let it fester, the worse it gets.

Selena: Yes. Yes.

Ryan: So if there's an issue, address it promptly. One of the ways you can go about doing that... How can they go about doing that?

Selena: Create a respectful environment for discussion. I think of this more as honoring. How can I honor my husband? How can I be respectful to him in our home? I need to commit. I got to commit to being respectful in how I talk and what I say and when I bring things up and in the tone that I bring them up in, in the heart orientation, in the posture Everything needs to be, again, humble and submitted to the Lords.

I think respect becomes a more natural overflow, the more that you practice this humility. I have to care that and acknowledge that God cares about what I say, how I say it. He has instructed me as His child how to speak to my husband. And we speak with respect. I don't speak to him as a) another girlfriend. He's not my emotional lapdog, right? I don't speak to him as just a coworker or... excuse me. I don't speak to him as a roommate. He's my husband. We are in covenant together. So there's going to be a different type of respect that comes in our tone and approach and how we speak to one another.

Ryan: I don't speak to you like a buddy, right? Just before we hit record, I was like... I was just reflecting. I don't know what made me reflect this, but I was like, Man, I can't believe how I used to communicate to you. I wasn't mean, but I was sharp. I was impatient. I think just like a lot of the young husbands, I think you you're a little bit too full of yourself.

Selena: Yeah. And so super like black and white, I think, and not as much nuanced.

Ryan: Just not loving

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: And just not... in some-

Selena: We're both learning together. I was a little surprised by your comment but I was like, Okay, I'll let you own it.

Ryan: You've always been so gracious to me.

Selena: Aw. [laughs]

Ryan: I think I've come to hold myself to... I'll say a higher and a different standard.

Selena: Yes. It leads me to want to hold myself to a higher standard.

Ryan: Honestly, we wrote these communication books, it changed the communication culture in our home. Like, if you ever want to change or write a book about something, that's how it really gets into your guts. I don't know. Maybe.

But I think when you talk about respecting the offices of marriage, me as husband, you as wife, as a husband, you don't get to speak to your wife however you feel like speaking to your wife.

Selena: Wife doesn't either.

Ryan: You always submit your communication to Christ because how does He love His bride? Well, in every way. Humbling Himself to even death on a cross. You lay down your life for your wife. That doesn't mean you're a doormat, but it means that you certainly don't get to communicate from a place of self-righteousness, pride, anger, or impatience.

Selena: And that goes the same way for the wife.

Ryan: Amen. So yeah, you create a respectful environment where these types of discussions can happen, where you're addressing these issues promptly. The environment has to do with timing, it has to do with your approach, it has to do with knowing God cares, knowing that you have a way that you've been commanded to communicate.

Within that communication environment and you're actively addressing these things, you provide clear explanation. Sometimes it's tempting to kind of obscure things.

Selena: Well, I don't know about obscure. You think you're saying something clearly and it's just not hitting the note that you're trying to resonate here. And so be

patient in how you explain things, be patient in providing clarity. It's going to take time and effort.

Ryan: Know what you mean to say, and then find the words to say it the way you mean it. As opposed to saying the first way that comes to your mind, and hoping that it falls the way that you kind of think it might fall.

Selena: Take your time.

Ryan: So that's clarity of communication. You have to get rid of all that signal, or I mean, all that noise, the clutter in the speech, the clutter in the body language, and speak clearly so that the signal is received with the fidelity with which it was sent. That's the goal of communication.

Then along those lines, this is my practical part of communication, but provide or share relevant evidence. Again, within the communication. Because you're trying to rebuild trust, right? This is part of rebuilding trust. You don't just start like, say, I want you to trust me, but I'm not going to actually show you evidence of that trust and trustworthiness.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: So we have this thing we've talked about. Maybe shoot an episode on this in the near future if we haven't done it in a while. This is the phone drop test. And what is it? It's just simple. At any moment, Selena could say, "Hey, can I see your phone?" And I'll just put it on, I'll drop it on the table and say, go for it. And what's that test? Tests, okay, what kind of activity am I using my phone for?

Selena: What have you been saying on X? [both laughs] Have you been posting on the YouTube?

Ryan: That one's password protected. Too spicy. But you know, things like internet history. And of course, if you are tricky enough, you can do a phone drop test and still not be caught.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: This is not about the privacy.

Selena: No. And I think as whoever is the offended you also need to approach this phone drop test with humility and care and tenderness. And I'm not a policeman. I'm not going to just take advantage of like, "I know you probably were looking at, give me your phone." Like, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa. Slow down.

Ryan: That's a very different-

Selena: That's not a phone drop test. That's a demanding test.

Ryan: Yeah. I mean, you can definitely be very... have lacked tact completely, lack tact or you can be kind in it. And so I'd say be kind in that. And I just want to say this because it always comes up when we talk about the phone drop test that people are like, "You're just wanting to invade your... you lack privacy."

Well, the whole point of this conversation is to regain trust so that you can... whatever that privacy is. But I hope we don't believe in privacy between spouses, by the way.

Selena: Clearly your idea of privacy didn't actually work out if you're here and trust has been broken.

Ryan: So it's about transparency. It's about regaining trust. It's not about her policing me like you just said.

Here's the final one.

Selena: Maybe we shouldn't have called these tangible. Because I feel like they're all intangible except for this one. That's take action.

Ryan: Okay. Sure. Take action. Maybe there's five steps and take action and get away with it. It's actually six steps. Sorry. Take action. So if you're the trust breaker, be proactive. In other words, you're offering opportunities to rebuild the trust. I mean, don't be the trust breaker then expect your spouse to be the one that's asking all the time.

Selena: All the time.

Ryan: I said, you'd be proactive. And if you're the person whose trust was broken, offer your loving response. In other words, this is the proactive response to a proactive building of trust.

Selena: Meet it at the same level. Yeah.

Ryan: You must offer trust when it's due. Like, don't withhold it if it's due. Be generous with your words.

Selena: This is the one I was talking about making a plan to tangibly rebuild trust just ahead of myself earlier in this episode. But what is the ideal? If you've been

spending without limits or there's been porn use or there's been just emotional affairs, those types of things on the phone, you need to go to that place and you need to start setting those boundaries tangibly.

Ryan: Where are we headed?

Selena: What's the ideal? Where are we headed?

Ryan: We want to be able to enjoy our finances together without micromanagement.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We want to have a sex life that is free of bitterness. It's free of...

Selena: Expectations that are set by an outside influence.

Ryan: It's enjoyable to both of us. It's pure. The marriage bed is pure. We want that.

Selena: Yeah. What's the ideal?

Ryan: Or we want zero, you know, insert addictive substance. We want zero addictive substance abuse, alcohol, drugs, marijuana. That's being mainstreamed right now. Microdosing of psychedelics is being mainstreamed right now. I will come out and say this. I think any sort of drug is a form of pharmakeia and I think they are expressly against scripture. I can get into a whole... you've heard me going on that rabbit trail, but it is not okay. Deuteronomy 18, check it out. Pharmakeia is horrible. Drugs are that. It's a spiritual thing. It's not just a physical thing. So you want to be free of that.

Selena: Yes. What is the ideal? What is something that we both can say, yes, this is where we want to go with this? And then like I was trying to say again, make a plan, get a plan in place. Remove the person's phone number, cut off all social media disconnection. I would say cut off social media for a time.

If it's a situation with a coworker, then you need to use wisdom and discernment in that. That may mean looking for another job if things have progressed further than they should. Remember, it's walking in faith, it's walking in the light. If you've spent thousands of dollars without telling your spouse, you need to start small, get a small threshold of any spending over \$20. You know, you got to take the tangible steps rebuild that trust and become diligent in that. Because again, it's a heart reset, right? It's attitude. It's an ideal.

- Ryan:** Well, the whole point of a plan is that's the first step, right?
- Selena:** It's not always going to be that next step.
- Ryan:** Then raise that limit or remove the amount of check-ins, remove the... whatever those things that you're putting in place, because you want to be free of it, you want to be to the ideal. I would encourage you to put in, into this plan, ways for you to stay connected as well.
- This might sound like totally counter-cultural, but I don't care. Plan your intimacy. If you know intimacy is good, you know that it helps you, which I believe it does have repairing qualities in a relationship-
- Selena:** Absolutely.
- Ryan:** ...I think God made it that way, then why not put it in the plan? And why not make it less of a-
- Selena:** Marital to-do and more of a-
- Ryan:** ...and less of a, you know, let's just kind of read the stars and see like how's the night going? What's my wife thinking?
- Selena:** We put things into different boxes too many times. And you know what? You're married, make love, have babies, like-
- Ryan:** You said it.
- Selena:** Do the thing that will get you close physically, emotionally.
- Ryan:** Yes, yes, yes.
- Selena:** Yes. And a thousand times. Yes. [both laughs]
- Ryan:** I will. I do. Good. And then the final part of this, well get help if you need it. Now I-
- Selena:** I think you need it. I think you absolutely need it.
- Ryan:** You should be walking in community.
- Selena:** Absolutely. A break of trust, the blessing from that could be finding community. But ideally before that you have community around you.

- Ryan:** It's funny how that's really hard to do if you have not taken step one, which is be humble. If you think we can't go to my pastor, I don't want him to know. Well, that's not humble.
- Selena:** Hello, that's what pastors are there for.
- Ryan:** Hello. Your pastor is also a sinner.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And by the way, if he judges you in a way that is not bringing about the sanctification in a way that's not loving, then you know what, he's not a great pastor. So good, godly friends. Like if you think, oh, we can't tell our friends because what if they'll know that.
- Selena:** They'll think poorly of us. They'll lose respect for us. If they are truly-
- Ryan:** This is how revivals start. I'm convinced. This is how revivals start, is you have some people who are humbled before the Lord, they see their sin for what it is, they walk out righteousness, sanctification to the process of gospel reconciliation, and boom, fire starts. And also marriages are being repaired. Families are flourishing. Churches are growing. I think this is how it starts I feel like.
- Selena:** And you never know people's stories. Like you may be sharing your story and someone else is like, yeah, you know what, we actually walked through that five years ago. Friend, let me pray with you. Friend, let's meet and talk about, you know, how we can support you guys during this season.
- Ryan:** Or you find the couple that they have yet to come out with it in their own marriage. They're not listening to this podcast. They're not walking out the plan.
- Selena:** Transparency begets transparency.
- Ryan:** They're now emboldened and equipped to walk alongside you. And maybe you begin to minister to them out of your own brokenness.
- Selena:** And there's fruit to be had when we're obedient to the word of God. Right?
- Ryan:** Amen. And then as part of the plan piece, do reviews periodically. Now, we talked about scheduling time to connect intimately, time to do date nights, communication, stuff like that. But also schedule reviews to say, okay, we're one week, one month, two months out from our fracture from this moment.

How are we doing now? I'm amazed at how often husbands don't just sit down with their wife and say, wife, how is your heart?

Selena: There's gotta be some specific questions I think asked depending on what the breakage was. Have those consistent questions. And like you're saying, get to the heart of the matter. How has your trust with me grown or how have I deteriorated it? Where have we been, where are we going and how can we improve? Start there?

Ryan: This is why that assess and confess... or what was it? Confess-

Selena: Address.

Ryan: Address and confess. That's why it's so important. Because if you've not addressed or confessed anything, yeah, well you're kind of starting-

Selena: Start to ask those questions.

Ryan: You want to keep this conversation on a simmer. And then when you get to these check-ins it's, you don't have to bring it up to full speed. Instead, you can say like, we've been doing the addressing and confessing thing. I know I've maybe made some mistakes, but I'm hoping that I'm beginning your trust because as I'm working through whatever patterns of behavior that brought us here, those may not be resolved overnight.

So part of the way that that happens is through this ongoing dialogue in your patience with me as the one who's betrayed the trust and wanting to walk out of it and light... you know, that's cleansing happens over time.

Selena: And ideally you're starting with those small increments and it feels you're like just consistently asking the questions, opening the doors, you know, examining, examining. But as time goes on, the check-ins get less frequent, the freedom, the confidence in your covenant in the marriage that God has given you begins to flourish. And then you get to, you know, say in a year from now, Wow, look at what God has done, right?

The freedom grows. You're not always in the beginning stages of triage and whatnot. So we want to just encourage you, I think, be patient. Be patient with the process.

Ryan: And that's the sixth bonus one.

Selena: I was trying to not say that because you had five.

- Ryan:** No, I want it to be very practical and I want this to be something that you have in your mind earmarked as a piece. Be patient. All right. Because you must plan for the long haul. If the rest of your lives together is the time frame.
- Selena:** You'll be tempted to jump ship. You'll be tempted to just throw in the towel, to give up, to just fly off the cuff. Nope. Repent. Stay the course.
- Ryan:** If you think it should be resolved in a month and it's not, you're destined for disappointments.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** If marriage is for life, what makes you think you must fix it faster than it can be fixed? Remember, humility is what starts this process. It means humility toward the process itself. Knowing that God doesn't give you a pill overnight to fix your sin. That's not how He works.
- Selena:** Thank you, Lord.
- Ryan:** He works through sanctification, which is a chipping and a carving and a slow growth. That's how God works. An oak doesn't grow overnight. But you know what does grow overnight?
- Selena:** Weeds.
- Ryan:** You know what else dies after a day in the sun?
- Selena:** Weeds.
- Ryan:** Weeds. We have two mighty oak trees on our land here, and boy, do those things flourish. Doesn't matter if it's hot, cold, whatever. You know why? They have deep roots. They have strong and strong root.
- Selena:** They have roots as big as them.
- Ryan:** They have strong wood. And so oaks don't grow overnight, weeds do. But oaks also don't die overnight, but weeds die after one day of sun. So you need to be patient in the process, trusting that God is working. So allow each other the time. Allow God... Now, we don't allow God anything. He does what He's going to do. But we do need to orient our hearts in a way that's going to be patient toward Him so that his sanctification process happens the way that he designed. So just be patient. Be patient.

So there's the six really tangible points. Five plus one. I'll say that. Bonus one. Very tangible ways to begin rebuilding trust. But here I want to remind you, remember the bigger question is this: How can we be obedient to God in this journey of rebuilding, of healing, of reconciliation? How can you be obedient to God in this process?

And you can't ask that question from a place of pride. Now, why can't we ask that question from a place of pride? Because we see God for who he is. Well, who is God? God is the creator of the universe. He is holy. He is perfect. He is true. He's given us His law. And guess what? We've broken His law. This is where the gospel comes in.

What is the gospel? It is this. It's the good news. It's not good advice. Many people say, look, Christianity is do the right thing and you'll be saved. That's good advice.

Selena: That's not it.

Ryan: The gospel is Christ has done it. Christ has accomplished the thing. What you need to do to get the thing is to look to Christ.

Selena: Believe.

Ryan: He is our savior. He is the one that has given us salvation, the righteousness that we cannot earn.

Selena: He took on our sin.

Ryan: Take on our sin. He took on our sin. We want you to respond or at least understand the reality that you are a sinner and you stand before a holy God, right? And there is this big gap. Well, how do you close that gap? The only way to close that gap is to place your trust in Christ. And so we want you to do that.

To that end, we recommend three things. You talk to a friend who's a Christian and say, Let's read the Bible together. Show me who Jesus is. Find a church that preaches out of the Bible. If you don't have either of those things, we have a website that might help you. I trust that it will. It's thenewsisgood.com.

All right. Let's pray, wife.

Selena: Okay, husband.

Ryan: Lord, thank you for the gift of reconciliation. First off, that you've reconciled us to You. That we have betrayed you. We have sinned against You. We have

betrayed the covenant You have with humanity and that we are called to be righteous, but we are not. So, Lord, thank You for reconciling us to you for not being impatient with us. Thank You for sanctifying us, for drawing us unto You.

I pray You help the couples, help us. Those dealing with betrayal, dealing with sin and the brokenness that it brings, I pray You'd help them trust You, help them be patient. And Lord, I pray by Your grace that they would experience full reconciliation and marriage be better, stronger, sweeter than it's ever been before. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Amen. Thank you so much for joining us. If you want to partner with us, that's one of the main ways that God has seen fit to provide for us through the fierce fellowship. I'd like to say it's as cool as the fellowship of the one ring. If I were a Tolkien character... I'd like to think that I'm Aragorn.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: He's definitely a dwarf with that attitude. Or an orc.

Selena: You know what? I do identify with the dwarves.

Ryan: Dwarves are natural sprinters. Anyway, you can have some salty pork later. Anyway, if you want to join the fierce fellowship, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. I'm going to draw this out because my wife is sweating in this hot office.

Selena: It is like 85 degrees in here, guys. It was a hot afternoon, summer afternoon.

Ryan: She hates it when I do the end stuff and she's tired. So I'm just gonna keep trying it. [laughs] For my health and for hers, ladies and gentlemen, this episode of the fierce marriage podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: See you again, Lord willing, in about seven days. So until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

Ryan: Salty pork. [laughs]

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - 1 John 1:7
 - Deuteronomy 18

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com
 - [See-Through Marriage](#)
 - [How A Husband Speaks](#)
 - [How A Wife Speaks](#)

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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

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

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fiercemarriage>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fiercemarriage>

Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>