

ADVICE FOR IMPROVING A DIFFICULT MARRIAGE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/advice-for-improving-a-difficult-marriage>

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Selena: Love means I need to be patient right now. I need to be kind. I need to long suffer, maybe, in some instances. That's why we want to stay in the ring with one another.

Ryan: A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. How true is that in marriage?

Selena: There were moments where it felt like it was just going to be darkness forever. It just kind of felt like disconnect. That's just where we were.

Ryan: If we're a healthy marriage, get through this difficulty. You want the same thing. What could it be like to have communication in a healthy place?

Selena: I feel like God's given me wisdom and clarity on being able to ignore the feelings, or the feelings aren't going to take control of the wheel right now.

Ryan: We don't say the word "divorce", and you shouldn't say the word divorce. That shouldn't be thrown around. It's not an option.

Selena: There's more going on than just the conflict that you see in front of your face. The Lord is faithfully at work in your hearts, in your marriage, and he's using it to sanctify you. Marriage is not just the boat to happiness. That is not the goal of marriage.

Ryan: How do we break out of these ruts? When you feel like hope is lost, you feel like you've tried everything, what are some ideas to get us out of those patterns?

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Ryan: All right. I was going to ask, what's the most difficult season you think we've ever been through as a couple?

Selena: Probably your heart surgery, I would say, was probably the most difficult. But at the same time, we were pretty young and naive, so I don't know that we understood the whole weight of that situation. When you had heart surgery in another country, Fierce Marriage Book, check it out, for the whole story.

Ryan: FierceMarriageBook.com.

Selena: There you go. We did have some post-surgery when we came home. You were kind of a different person after all that medicine, and I feel like, I don't know, our communication was rough. We had different ideals. I don't know. It felt we were just kind of distant. There were also post-church hurt stuff that was rough on our relationship.

Ryan: Yeah, the things you're bringing up, I would categorize as external difficulties. Things that are happening to us, and that can either drive us closer together or it can be a wedge between us. Yes.

Selena: You're asking about other things.

Ryan: No, you're saying that in some sense was a wedge, but I would say that for a season, but that brought us closer together.

Selena: It did.

Ryan: You didn't ask, but I'm going to answer the question for myself.

Selena: I was going to ask you. I was going to. Okay. Give me a chance. See, it's fine. What about you, Ryan? Were there moments in your-

Ryan: What a surprise to be asked this question.

Selena: Moments your marriage... our marriage?

Ryan: In my marriage. Let me just tell you, Selena, how hard my marriage has been. You know, I'm thinking of that time we were up at Whistler.

Selena: Oh, you're going to bring that up. Yikes.

Ryan: We live in the Northwest, not too far from Vancouver, BC, which has a beautiful place called Whistler. We were there in the summertime. And that was just a really difficult season in our communication. I feel like we were beating our heads against the wall for weeks and weeks and weeks. It's like we would try to make advances and it would turn back into the dysfunction, and we tried-

Selena: And the vacation piece was what triggered our start of it.

Ryan: Yeah. It was some dynamics with in-laws and things that ended up being very frustrating in high school.

Selena: Oh, yeah. Those were some rough times.

Ryan: And then we ended up going to another spot. Remember, we went to another lake to another-

Selena: Our friends were there. ...

Ryan: ...thing of hanging out with friends.

Selena: Have you ever had to work through a conflict in front of your friends? That's fun.

Ryan: I'd say that was probably the hardest between us. It was an internal difficulty.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: If you're listening to this, you're watching this, there's a good chance, I would say there's probably a 100% chance that you've been through difficulty, you're currently in a difficulty, or you're headed for some sort of difficulty in marriage. What do we do? How do we break out of these ruts? How do we break out of, you know, when you feel like hope is lost, you feel like you've tried everything, what are some ideas to get us out of those patterns?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Today we're going to talk about at least one thing, one idea to get you through a difficult season in your marriage. We'll see you on the other side.

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Selena: I think that one of the hardest parts of some of those moments that we went through was just the fact that there were moments where it felt like it was just going to be darkness forever. It just felt like disconnect was going to... That's just where we were. We were just not going to connect again. We felt really hopeless. There was a lot of despair, a lot of anger, frustration. Walls were up and they were 20 feet thick. It was like, Wow, I'm not really sure where to go with this.

Ryan: I remember thinking at one point, I'm like, "I don't know if we're going to get out of this."

Selena: Right. It was a hard place.

Ryan: And we had never been in that spot. We always tell couples, and we don't say the word "divorce", and you shouldn't say the word divorce. That shouldn't be thrown around. It's not an option. But in my head, I was like, Okay, that's not an option. Maybe it should be or maybe-

Selena: You actually thought for a moment-

Ryan: I'm like, where do we go? Where do we go? Because this is not going anywhere. Praise God, because He got us through it.

Selena: He allowed it. He intended for us to go through it.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah.

Selena: For His glory.

Ryan: I think He uses it for His glory. Here we are, hopefully to that end, using it for His glory.

If you don't know who we are, my name is Ryan. This is my lovely wife, Selena. We are the Fredericks. Welcome to the Fierce Marriage Podcast. It's our joy to be here every week, just pointing you to Christ, the saving grace of God in Christ, particularly in the areas of marriage and family. This ministry, we've been doing it for over a decade. It's largely made possible by our patrons. And we have 11 new patrons.

Selena: Oh, wow. Praise God.

Ryan: And I wanted to say hello to some of you. So let me just pull that up really quickly. All right. Hello to our new Fierce Fellows. If you want to become a new patron, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. But here are some of our newest-

Selena: Fellows.

Ryan: Our newest fellows, the newest elite enlist. I don't know, people that would have been enlisted. All right. So Melanie. Melanie Roberts, hello. Thank you for joining. Sue, hello. Kim, hello. I only have first names here. Josh, I'm guessing it's Josh and Colette, Hello. Sharon, welcome to the Forge or the Fierce Fellowship, I should say. Savannah, welcome. Melanie, I already said Melanie. Amy and Jeffrey and Wendy, welcome to the Fierce Fellowship. Thank you so much. Your complicity in this mission makes it more fun, frankly,

for us. It's so wonderful to see the body of Christ providing for the ministries that serve the body.

If you want to join that, go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. This week I was perusing the internet as one does. And I'm always kind of on the lookout for stuff to talk about, content that helps obviously our own marriage, but also things we can bring to you. And there's a friend, he's actually become a friend. He's an author. He was an author before he was a friend. His name is Michael Foster. He wrote a book called *It's Good to Be a Man*. He's a pastor in Ohio. I've gotten to know him over the last few years. We've talked shop, if you will, around books and ministry, particularly to men in marriage. And he's just a really, I think, succinct kind of... He cuts like a hot knife through butter.

He's a well-thought man. He's well-read. He cares deeply, obviously, about Scripture and the Lord and exactly what God would have to say, particularly around cultural issues, particularly around the areas of marriage and family.

He shared, I think one day this week, a bunch of thoughts he had for helping a difficult marriage. And so I wanted to take one of those thoughts that he shared. You can look up more of Michael's thoughts. Again, I do think he's a great thinker. He contributes a lot to my life. Go to thisisfoster.com. That's his personal blog. He's got some really cool stuff there.

All right, so here's what he said. We'll just read it and we'll talk through it kind of line by line. Hopefully, this encourages you if you're going through a difficult season. He says, "Advice for improving a difficult marriage. Part one. You do need to address what is wrong in your marriage, but you should start with what could be right. Couples trying to fix their marriage often start by listing every hurt, every disappointment, but that turns the conversation into a courtroom. One prosecutes, the other defends. The longer it goes, the less either of you is actually listening. Instead, you're just waiting for your turn to argue, and nothing changes. Instead of rehashing the past, focus on building the future. What would a stronger marriage look like a month from now, a year, five years? Picture it in detail, your mornings, your evenings, your weekends. What are you building together? The clearer your vision, the easier it is to move forward. Marriage isn't a trial. It's a workshop. The goal isn't to win an argument, it's to fix what's broken and create something better."

So the reason this jumped out at me, and again, he has a way with words, and it's so obvious, but don't just think about what is wrong, but instead think about what could be right. I see a lot of couples it's like you're so deep in the trenches.

Selena: Trying to fix what's wrong instead of seeing what could be right and what we're working for.

Ryan: And rightfully so. When you're in the trenches and you're taking enemy fire, you're just concerned with not getting nailed in the head by the enemy fire. You don't necessarily have the strategic wherewithal to say, like, yeah, we're in this battle because we're trying to win the whole [inaudible 00:08:53].

Selena: If you've been fighting so long, you get fatigued. You start questioning why you're in the battle. Right? You start questioning whether or not it's worth it. Some of the conversations that we had during those difficult times.

Ryan: And so thinking about what could be right in a marriage is the way of lifting your eyes and saying, Okay, pause. Let's acknowledge the 800-pound gorilla in the room, Carol. Let's acknowledge this.

Selena: You know you know.

Ryan: Big Office fans. Let's acknowledge this fact that this is difficult. Let's also acknowledge another fact. We want a good marriage. We want the same thing. What could this be? If we had a marriage that was healthy, what could it be? What can be right? And you start thinking in those terms, whether you realize it or not, you actually begin to... so you're no longer facing each other, but now you're looking outward and coming alongside each other looking toward a common horizon.

Selena: I think as couples, we can forget that we have agency in our marriage. We don't have to sit back and let whatever's going to happen happen. We always say on this podcast, our feelings don't get to determine our direction. Beliefs inform behavior. If we're acting a certain way, we're believing something. So what is that belief that we are holding onto that's determining how we behave with one another and how we love one another?

But I think what Michael's saying here too, is that you can make your marriage great again. There is hope because of Christ, because of the gospel and the goodness that He has brought and reconciled us to our Lord and our Father.

So there is hope here. There is light here. There are things that you're possibly already even doing right that you should acknowledge. So we can't forget that we've been given agency in this relationship called marriage.

Ryan: Right. Yeah. Because many times, because we're so fast to point... again, instead of looking at what's wrong, so I'll say-

Selena: We our eyes.

Ryan: ...what's wrong with you. You don't listen to me. You don't appreciate me. You don't, you know, whatever the thing is. And so that becomes a crutch. It becomes the excuse when you are failing all along to look inward. One of the things we do when we talk to couples, when we go to events and we do marriage talks, we say, draw a circle around yourself. Now everyone in that circle is who you're going to work on.

Your spouse is off-limits for you. And so what that does is that you actually start dealing with what you can actually change and start thinking about what actually could be. And you stop just pointing the finger and using it as a crutch. And that you have agency. That's what you were saying. And that you can actually become the type of person that has a healthy marriage. You can become the type of couple that builds a healthy marriage. You can do it. You can change your heart. I mean, you can ask the Lord to change your heart. He can actually give you things to begin rooting out the weeds to pluck out of your heart. Anyway, that struck me is that you can begin to lift your eyes and see what could be.

Selena: Well, and I think the lifting of the eyes is taking on a heavenly perspective on earthly things. We're seeing marriage, not as, gosh, I'm chained to this person. I'm going through a really difficult time with them. They aren't getting it. You know, we're not on the same page.

Ryan: I'm changing and they're not.

Selena: Yeah. There's more going on than just the conflict that you see in front of your face. The Lord is faithfully at work in your hearts, in your marriage, and He's using it to sanctify you. Marriage is not just the boat to happiness. That is not the goal of marriage. God has created it with layers upon layers of purposes to fulfill, to create families and children and to be fruitful and to multiply and to have experienced oneness and unity. So these are the things that...

Ryan: And to give you a picture of the gospel.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: To be able to say, I still love you, even though I see your faults. And you love me still even though I have not been perfectly loving toward you?

Selena: Yeah. I love what he said here about how the conversation turns into a courtroom when you're just listing off your hurts. And we're not saying like

suppress all your hurts. Don't say anything ever to your spouse. Like clearly that's not what we're saying here or what Michael is saying.

I think there's a time and a place for us to list out how we've been feeling and why. But when we're constantly doing this, we're pitted against each other and... when we've been in those places, I remember Ryan... you always say you always remind me, Hey, I'm on your side. I'm not against you. I'm for us. Which changes the whole dynamic of the conversation, right? We're going to start talking like to and with each other versus at each other. And I think that has definitely changed the... it's lowered the courtroom feel when we're having those difficult conversations.

Ryan: Yeah. He mentioned this. So this is part one. He did four parts on this, I think. One of the parts had to do with... I forget how he worded it, but it was very similar to what we say in terms of communication, learning to sift through the signal and the noise in that the whole point of communicating is to get an idea, like from point A to point B, from my heart, my mind into your heart, your mind, and to understand each other. And a lot of times that noise can get in the way and the signals can become so staticky that you're no longer communicating, you're just making a bunch of noise at each other.

It's not a courtroom. We're not here to just win an argument. We stay in the ring with each other to talk to each other, with each other, not just at and not just to prove a point, but to instead solve a problem.

Selena: Right. And to reconcile and to practice forgiveness, to practice compassion, to practice empathy with each other and to practice, you know, a soft answer when you just want to blurt out an angry, bitter retort, you know? It's like, no, this is what the Bible says. Okay. Love means I need to be patient right now. I need to be kind. I need to long suffer maybe in some instances, and I need to help deal with this. That's why we want to stay in the ring with one another, because the longer we argue, the further away we're going to get from reconciliation and joy and hope and unity that Christ has purposed for us.

Ryan: Proverbs 15:1, a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. How true is that in marriage? Something happened, by the way, I'll just tell our audience, in my wife. I've said this to you, something has changed in you in the last year. I'll just say it's the Lord. I'll say we've grown, more mature. Something has happened. But I've just noticed in our communication I'll be frustrated about something and I'll kind of let my guard down.

Selena: Be sassy.

Ryan: Yes. Okay. I'll say something in an untactful way. I'll be kind of more critical about something. And time and time again, you've given me a soft answer. In the past you've given me a harsh answer and that's escalated things because I'm like ready to throw down. And then you were like, all right, you want to do this? Buttercup, let's do it. And so we'll throw down and it'll turn into a thing. Whereas you've shown me that your soft answer really does turn away wrath and it de-escalates the situation. And I'm learning as well to do the same. I mean.

Selena: I'm glad I could teach you something.

Ryan: I never had harsh answers.

Selena: Never.

Ryan: I was always a soft answer. Anyway. So I'm just telling you that it, man, it-

Selena: Be the first to start doing that. And I'm not saying that from my perspective. Yes, that's the Lord's work. I feel like God's given me wisdom and clarity on being able to have those, ignore the feelings or say, you know what, the feelings aren't going to take control of the wheel right now. I don't need to.

Ryan: I'll give you a quick example.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: One thing that drives me nuts is when things aren't where they're supposed to be.

Selena: One of the many things.

Ryan: I don't have that many things that drive me nuts, but when... okay. So like the bread, does the bread go in the fridge, does it go in the cupboard, or does it go on the counter?

Selena: Not on the counter because there's light and heat. It goes in the cupboard. And if the fridge is full, it goes in the cupboard.

Ryan: Case in point.

Selena: It can't always go in the fridge.

Ryan: I was looking for bread, I'm like, "My wife says it's not supposed to be in the light. And if it's cold, it stays longer." So I'm like, "In the fridge." It's not in the

fridge. Okay. Then it must be in the cupboard. I'm looking in the cupboard and I look, "Selena, why is there no bread in here?" And I turn around and you're like, "Well, it's on the... You tell me, "It's on the counter." I'm like, "Why is it on the counter?"

Selena: Because I just brought it out for you thinking that you would like it.

Ryan: I'll get irritated and I'll express the irritation. In the past you'd be like, You listen to me. And then it would become this whole thing. And you're just like, It's okay. It's on the counter. It's a small thing.

Selena: It's like I tell my girls, you can't just get frustrated with your first, you got to ask nicely. You got to talk nicely.

Ryan: Even if your frustration is completely understandable and legitimate.

Selena: So our next point he talks about instead of rehashing the past, let's focus on building the future.

Ryan: Let's build a bread box. That is just the matter.

Selena: I don't have counter space. Okay.

Ryan: That's true. You don't have the counter space for luxury such as these. So he says this, what would a stronger marriage look like a month from now, a year from now, or five years from now? Picture it in detail. I love this because you begin to envision. Whenever we lead couples through crafting the family vision statement, part of that is your core values, part is that your vision, that part of that is your mission itself. What's your mission sentence?

But I always help couples. I want couples to see the future. So we go through a process of envisioning. So you create these envision statements. So what do you picture your dinner table looking like? And Michael touches on this. What do you want to go all the way to your deathbed? Like, do you want a deathbed that's surrounded by a loving spouse, your kids, your grandkids, and by the Lord's grace, maybe even great-grandkids looking at you like glad because you're entering into eternity in that sense, but also mourning and loving you? Man, that table that is lively. Sorry. Go ahead.

Selena: That affects how you see today and the choices you make, the tone you decide to have, the garden you wish to invest in.

Ryan: And the fights that you choose to let go of, the battles.

Selena: That's what I mean is like, what are you going to really allow to happen? And is it worth it? Am I going to fight you on some of these things? That's really the hill I'm going to die on because what's that going to plant? What kind of fruit is that going to produce in our marriage?

Ryan: Yeah. Man, it does really put things into perspective. There's a cliché. It's a cliché for a reason is that you're not ready to die. You're not ready to live until you're ready to die. Right. So picture that. And I like doing the, you know... maybe take it back from the nth degree. So the dinner tables. Right now we have a lot of chaos around our meals because we have a two-year-old and a five-year-old and just kids.

Selena: I would say it's growing though. I mean, I think they're growing. But they won't always be like that.

Ryan: But one of my main laments is that like these days are fleeting. I can't believe how fast they're going by. I asked my mom... grandma was over. She's going to watch the kids while we record a podcast for you all. And beforehand I was asking her, I was like, is it better being a grandparent or a parent? And she was like, Being a grandparent so much better. So I'm like, okay, I can look forward... you know? I love being a parent. So like, if it's better, I'll bring it on.

So the picture of that in detail. Picture even... okay. So get out of the kind of scenario imagining, but now imagine the various categories of your marriage. What could it be like? If we're a healthy marriage, get through this difficulty, you want the same thing, what could it be like to have your communication in a healthy place?

Selena: Yeah. What could it be like to laugh together when you're 80? What could it be like to be present and attending church with your family when you're older?

Ryan: Talk about true deep things and not just the weather and not just schedules, not just bickering at each other.

Selena: Sports and whatnot. But actually talking about things that matter.

Ryan: Sharing your souls and bearing your souls and talking about the things of God. What could that be like? That's the first category. What could it be like to have finances that are healthy? Because a lot of times difficulty is brought on by financial hardship. And sometimes that financial hardship is self-imposed. There's lifestyle creep. There's poor decisions that are made. There's maybe past decisions that were made that were foolish. We've had to overcome that

on our own as well, in our own marriage as well. So picture, what could it be like?

I'm envisioning this time when maybe I don't have to work so many hours because we don't have as much debt, right? Or I'm envisioning a time when we're saving for those, you know, vacations or whatever, or we are just... this is not a stressor in our marriage. Start to envision what that could look like.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: And even lift your eyes even further. Again, we walk through this process in our Fierce Marriage material of budgeting, but not just budgeting for a lifestyle, but budgeting to give away.

Selena: Yeah. Budgeting to build the kingdom.

Ryan: Actual budget. Then you've got your ideal budget. You realize that we don't need anything else. So how wonderful would that be for us to be praying around how we can give to people and give to...

Selena: Give even more sacrificially because the economy of God's kingdom is truly the more you give, the more He gives you. So you're constantly finding ways to give and to give and to give with wisdom and to give faithfully. It could be, and should be a joy to look forward to and why you should press through some of the financial struggles you might be having. So...

Ryan: You're not going to get there tomorrow. That's why I think it's wise when Michael says, picture it a year out, five years out, or even 10 or 15 years, 20 years out, picture that. Because you remember you're trying to picture that together.

There's five of these areas I want to get through. The third one is conflict. Imagine a healthy marriage where you're not dealing with conflict in unhealthy ways, where you're actually dealing with the things that would divide you in a way that brings you even closer together. The things that...

Selena: You fight faster, you reconcile and forgive quicker, you're faster to repent, you're faster to get back to that unity.

Ryan: Yeah. Yeah. And you stick it to the devil. Like you stick it to the enemy saying, this will not be handled in any way other than that way which glorifies Christ. Right? Amen.

The fourth area, sex and intimacy. Imagine a healthy sex life in your marriage. Picture that. Talk about it. I know. I understand it's probably hard for a lot of couples to talk about this because it's a loaded topic.

Selena: Well, I don't know that everybody's been equipped to talk about it or knows that it's okay to feel a little awkward when you're talking about it, but like any...

Ryan: The awkwardness goes away.

Selena: Yes. That's what I'm saying.

Ryan: Yeah. Good job. Sorry. We're on the same page apparently. And we'll attest. Guys, we've been married 22 years, going on 22 years this September. Our intimate life has gotten only better. It's only gotten better as we've talked and figured it out together because you have your whole life to figure it out. It's not like the first five years were awesome and then it's just been a steady decline since. I would say the first five years were probably the toughest. Awesome in their own way. But you grow into it. It's not a fixed... Like you don't just exhaust sex and intimacy and then you're like, okay, that's it.

Selena: That's a very limited and honestly prideful place to be in terms of viewing sex. And very limiting. The Lord created it, designed it, and so there's many purposes and layers, different seasons for different reasons. We talk about that. Go look up our sex episodes, the sex podcast episodes that we discuss intimacy and closeness there.

Ryan: It's an area you can grow in.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: I'm willing to bet that you both want the same thing. You don't want to feel more disconnected. You want to feel more connected. You want to feel more intimate with each other, mind, soul, and body. Not just physically, but emotionally as well.

Selena: Spiritually.

Ryan: You want those things. So talk about that. Envision what it could look like. Remember, you're in the middle of a conflict. Pause it, suspend disbelief, and just envision what these things could look like. And then the fifth area is priorities. What could it look like if we had better priorities, we had better time management in our household, we had-

Selena: Well, schedules that-

Ryan: We said yes to the right things?

Selena: Yes. We left some space in between. Busy days, busy weeks. We recognize that there are seasons of some busyness, but I think there's seasons where we hustle, but I think the Lord really wants us to have peace and be anchored in Him faithfully, no matter what we're in.

Ryan: I'll say this. If you have a lifestyle and you've prioritized your time in such a way that you are too tired or too busy to go to church, that's a huge, huge red flag. We're told not to forsake the gathering of the saints. We are told that churches have structure. Structure begets commitment. It begs commitment. Basically, you can't be a part of a church if you're never there. You can't partake in the glories of the body of Christ and participate in bringing glory to Christ through the church if you are acting like it doesn't matter.

I always say this, and I'll say it again, is if you claim to love Christ, but you neglect His bride, what does that say about your love for Christ? It's a challenge. A lot of people will say, no, you don't go to church, you are the church. Well, you know what? Yes, you are the church, and yes, you do go to church because churches tend to gather in specific places.

Selena: The Lord commanded us to gather.

Ryan: You are a friend, but you also go to hang out with friends too, right? You are a part of the church, but you have to go there to be a part of it, right? So envision what these priorities could look like, what your marriage could be if your priorities were oriented around the right things.

Selena: Yeah. So what were those five examples?

Ryan: Communication, conflict, intimacy, finances, and priorities. Think about those five areas. Think about what it could look like. And I think that will go a long way in helping you get through whatever difficult season you're going through.

Selena: Fix our eyes on Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Where's that found in the Bible? Is that Hebrews?

Ryan: It's in the Bible. I think so, yeah. I think it's in Hebrews. Bear with each other and forgive any grievances you may have just as the Lord forgave you. Sometimes, friends, in a difficult season, you just need to bear and forgive. If you're legitimately wronged, just forgive. You can just forgive. People say all the time on the internet, you know what? You can just do things. You can just

decide to do a thing. You can also decide to just forgive. No, we're not saying don't deal with it. We're not saying sweep it under the rug. That's not what forgiveness is. Forgiveness is saying just as in Christ God forgave me, so in Christ, I can forgive you. Man, what a freeing thing, right? What a freeing thing. So that might be just the ticket as well. So in that same vein, right, I'll say, yeah, it's-

Selena: Marriage is about repentance and forgiveness.

Ryan: The life of a Christian is about repentance. It's ongoing repentance.

Selena: The mark of a healthy body, like the healthy church, is that we can come together with all of our sharp edges and we do wound each other on occasion. We try not to. But God is faithful. And when we do what Paul says in Colossians, we're bearing with one another, we are also committed to forgive one another. There's nothing I can hold against you. Our reality may look different after the sin, because there's a consequence that we have to face, but like you said, the Lord has forgiven us of so much, how can we hold each other?

Ryan: Amen. He has forgiven us. And what has He forgiven us of? Obviously, our sin. Now, what does that even mean? We have a holy God, thrice holy, and He's holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. I don't think we understand just how much we've sinned against God. I don't think we can, because we don't understand His holiness.

Selena: And we don't understand our sinfulness.

Ryan: So that's the good news of the gospel, right, is that I am an enemy of God because I'm dead in my sin. I've sinned actively, but I'm also born into sin. And so I need to be made right with Him. Well, how can I possibly be made right with a God, an infinite God whom I've offended infinitely? Well, I need that infinite God to bridge the gap for me. And He's done that through the person and work of Jesus Christ. To be a Christian is this, it means this, that you believe Jesus Christ actually walked the earth. There's great historical evidence to that effect. He did walk the earth. He did perform miracles. He did die and he was on the third day resurrected. He was actually dead and actually resurrected by the grace of God. And He's been resurrected to new life, and He resurrects us to new life when we place our faith in Him.

When we are believers of Christ, we are united with him in such a way that we are participants in His righteousness. He takes our sin, makes us, white as snow, clothes us with His righteousness, not our own. That's the good news of the gospel. And all it takes from us is to believe, is to believe.

So if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, we want you to believe in Him. We wanna call you brother, sister. And to that end, we say, talk to a friend who's a Christian, say, show me Jesus. Show me where to read in the Bible. Go to a church that preaches out of the Bible. You need it. You need the church and believe it or not, the church probably needs you.

Selena: Yeah. Amen.

Ryan: And then, if you have a hard time finding a good church, we have a church finder and a little bit of more of an explanation of what we're talking about at this website. It's thenewsisgood.com. We hope that blesses you. By the way, if you're a believer, you can always say share that website with somebody else as well. I think that's it.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for you being the ultimate, reconciliation. That you've given us yourself. You became flesh, you died on the cross, and you resurrected, and you want us to be resurrected in you. You want us to be made new in you, Lord. So we are thankful for that. You've given us the model for dealing with, difficult marriage, Lord. Christ, we are your bride. The church is your bride, and we are imperfect. Yet you are a long-suffering and you still love your bride and you still draw us unto you. Give us your grace. Give us your love. I pray that you'd help us to be a shadow of that in our marriage and the marriages, that are represented by people watching and listening to this. We love you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right. As a quick reminder, thank you to those of you who have become forge or fellowship members. I just get those terms mixed around.

Selena: It's okay.

Ryan: If you wanna become a fellowship member as well and join the elite-

Selena: Fellows?

Ryan: Special forces. It's the special marriage forces. Join the fierce fellowship. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. We would be honored to have you there. There are benefits, of course, books, rings, and things, but also just the benefit of being complicit in whatever God does through this because it's all by His grace. So that's it. This episode of the Fierce Marriage podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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