

3 SURE SIGNS OF A HEALTHY COUPLE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/3-sure-signs-of-a-healthy-couple-2>

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Ryan: Laughter is a great indicator of whether or not your marriage is in a good spot. And the cool thing is, if you realize you're not laughing together, it's one of the more actionable, tangible things you can do.

Selena: It can come from a place of joy. We have joy given to us in the Lord. He has given us life.

Ryan: That's why I don't want to use the word "respect". Oh, wives should respect their husbands, but husbands should also respect their wives. You view your wife as your wife, but there is a sense in which you cross a line and you start dishonoring your wife, you start dishonoring your Lord, you start dishonoring your marriage bed.

Selena: In terms of actual time it takes, it's not very long usually, it's such a big part of your marriage.

Ryan: Listen, this is my wife. I know her character. I know she loves me. I know she is covenantally minded. I know that she would never consciously withhold from me.

Selena: Power of laughter, we call it the secret weapon of your marriage.

Ryan: If you're on your game, if your garden is completely being tended to in the area of intimacy, what's that look like for your marriage?

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Selena: All right, babe, how do you know if we have a healthy marriage? If we're a healthy couple, are there any signs that can show us... or even maybe it's not us that is the unhealthy couple. Maybe it's friends around us. How can we recognize that maybe there's some health or there's some unhealth, what do you call that, sickness, disease?

Ryan: Dysfunction.

Selena: Dysfunction.

Ryan: If only there was a podcast episode that was dedicated to this topic. Clearly I know the answers because I'm seeing them in front of me. However, I'm thinking about us just anecdotally. Like, how do I know when we are starting to drift?

In my mind, it always starts with communication. Not just in my mind, but in our experience. It always starts with communication, gets kind of short and cold and terse in some ways and sharp. It just starts to break down.

Selena: It sure does. You do that a lot.

Ryan: If you got to say it, as my wife always says. And then that trickles into every other aspect of our marriage. Also in my own head. If I find that I'm reading into things in a way that is always kind of pitting us against each other, or it's reading, I would say, with the least charitable voice in my head, then I know that there's something in me. I'm not viewing you as a partner, as my spouse, as my wife, but instead I'm viewing you as an adversary, as somebody that I need to defeat in some way.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: So, anyway, if you're wondering how to tell if you are in a good spot, now you just know in your guts, right? But we would say, we're going to give you three things this week that are, I don't know, maybe the...

Selena: Kind of just telltale signs of...

Ryan: Tips of whatever those icebergs are.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And so if you start seeing these tips of these icebergs in an unfavorable way, I don't know how the analogy works, all right? But if they're not looking good, then you'll know that it's time to look a little deeper. So we will visit that on the other side.

[00:02:58] <music>

Ryan: All right. So I answered the first one. What are the telltale signs for you when you feel like we're starting to drift?

Selena: For me are the actual three that we're going to talk about.

Ryan: No, like just anecdotally, again, for the Fredricks.

Selena: Doodly.

Ryan: Doodly doodly.

Selena: When I get short with you, when I don't have any grace for you in my head, when I'm starting to blame you, question your motives, question whether or not you actually care about things or me, those are usually telltale signs of something's wrong, or I just need to put myself in check and some things need to be under control in my mind. I need to take some thoughts captive.

But I question it and if it is something, you know, I feel like it will bubble up to the surface more than once. And so if it's not shut down with a, "Hey, you know what? Remember he's on your side. Remember he does care about you. He does want the same things as you," then that does kind of put a kibosh on some of the things that might come up that aren't, you know, signs of health in that moment.

Ryan: Actually, it begs mentioning this one important qualification is that we're assuming a default posture here and that we're both in it. You know, we're not looking outward. There's some dysfunction that is brewing. Whereas there could be cases, and maybe this would be helpful for these cases too. I at least want to be aware of them. There could be cases where the husband or the wife is not acting as if they're committed to the marriage and is not acting as if they're committed to wanting the same thing, you know?

And so we're making some assumptions that we want to get back to that center, to that united place. And drift happens because of our sin nature, because of life circumstances, all that sort of stuff. Maybe we can address that in another episode.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: But before we go any further, I'm Ryan, this is Selena. Welcome to the show, Fierce Marriage. If you're watching, welcome to the YouTube channel. Make sure you hit that subscribe button. Hit the little bell things is all the kids are saying these days. The cool kids are doing it.

If you're listening to the podcast, I'm honored to know that many of our listeners are pumping iron as we speak. One, two, three.

Selena: Don't get their counts mixed up. Don't do that. That's mean.

Ryan: Get the squeeze. It's all about the squeeze.

Selena: Let them get their faithful reps.

Ryan: You know, my cousin and her husband, his name is Ryan as well. He is the size of a small Redwood tree. He is a massive man. And he told me once, he goes, "It doesn't matter the weight. It just matters to squeeze." I'm like, "Dude, proof's in the pudding. All right. I'm taking your advice because your arms are the size of my thighs."

Anyway, welcome to the podcast. This podcast is largely made possible by our patrons, by our Fierce Fellows, as we call them. Go to fierce.marriage.com/partner if you would like to be complicit in this mission. Our whole goal is to point couples to Christ and to renormalize the Christian vision for family, for parenting, for marriage.

And so we do that in part with our patrons in support. Go to fierce.marriage.com/partner. We'd love for you to pray about that. And if the Lord leads, we'll see you in there. Otherwise, Lord willing, we'll keep coming day in and day out.

The whole point of this is not to shed new light on the topics of marriage, but really just to be that voice in your ear on a weekly basis that says your marriage matters, God cares about your marriage, He has a lot to say about it and how you live it out as a big deal with how you flourish in life and how you flourish in the church and in parenting and all that sort of stuff. So we're just going to be that weekly reminder for you. All right.

Selena: I think we should just come out of the gate and say the three signs and then we can kind of talk about them because I would want to know all three. And then when I know all three, then I feel like I want to dig deeper into them. So that's me as a listener.

So three signs of a healthy marriage are, number one, mutual high regard for one another. Number two, laughter together and consistently. And number three, healthy, intimate life. We are going to talk about each of those and unpack them just a bit for y'all because I know you're all now desperately chomping at the bit to know what that means.

Ryan: I'm convinced if you have all three of these things, then you can basically say-

Selena: We've got a healthy marriage.

Ryan: We've got a pretty healthy marriage. And the flip side to that is if you're feeling like any one of these is feeling shaky, if any one of these is shaky, that doesn't

mean your marriage is doomed. It just means that maybe you need a little bit of extra care in any one of these areas.

So let's talk about number one, mutual high regard for one another. What exactly do we mean by that?

Selena: You tell me. You came up with it. I'm kidding. Well, we did talk about mutual respect for one another, but you were like, "No, I feel like 'regard' is more of the word because."

Ryan: Well, there's a number of reasons why I prefer 'regard'. One of them is because of how people typically want to treat Ephesians 5.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: There's the passage talking about roles in marriage, wives respect your husbands, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. And that's where you get the famous book, Love and Respect. What that is, is it's articulating the differences in roles in marriage.

Well, a lot of folks will read the passage before that and they'll say, respect one another. And they take that to mean that that's washing out the differences between a husband and a wife in terms of their role differences. That's why I don't want to use the word respect because people will say, Oh, wives should respect their husbands, but husbands should also respect their wives. And yes, they should. But in terms of the marital dynamic, there is a different timber to that type of respect, a different tone to it. As fellow image bearers, we respect one another.

So when I say high regard, the reason why I like it is because 'high regard' to me is you view your wife as your wife, if you're a husband, and if you're a wife, you view your husband as your husband, the way God has ordained the husband to be.

I view you as the way God has ordained the wife to be. So I have a high regard for you as an individual, but also a high regard for your station. On these days when we record the podcast, my mom comes in, she gets to be super grandma and she takes our daughters and they go to parks and they go to get ice cream and she's just amazing.

Selena: Go to the library or adventures.

Ryan: It's beautiful because it's this rhythm where we get to have our kids engaging with their grandmother, but also we get the time to do this work for our

listeners. I walked in, I had just come from a meeting, I got home as she was loading up the kids and I'm saying hi to all the daughters, giving them hugs and kisses and then I say, "Oh, hey mom." And I give her a hug and I go, "Hey wife." And my mom kind of laughed, she's like, "Wife." And I thought, "Well, that is a little bit unusual," but in my mind, like that's the highest title that I could give you. It's the most magnificent thing that I could relate to you, as sort of relate you to me. I don't know. That's what I mean by high regard. Does that make sense?

Selena: Right. Again, as you're listening to this episode, these are supposed to be somewhat descriptive, but also they have kind of a prescriptive undercurrent. So describing this high regard for one another, if you're saying, wow, yeah, I feel like we're growing in this, or I feel like, yes, what you're saying is what we're experiencing, or if you're sitting there saying, ah, I don't know that I've experienced this, or it's been a long time, or I feel like we're just not there, 2 Peter 1:3-5 reminds and encourages us that we have been given everything we need for life and godliness. That means respecting one another, loving one another, having a high regard for each other as a spouse.

It says, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires."

I would encourage you to read the rest of that passage, at least until verse 11. I could have fit in here, but Ryan says I always have too much scripture. Too many big swaths of scripture.

Ryan: We only get like 35 minutes.

Selena: And so if the Lord has equipped us, then we can stand in that. We can walk in that and we can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit in us that would facilitate, you know, this higher regard for one another. I mean, this fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control. So all of those things.

If the Holy Spirit is at work in us and producing that fruit through sanctification, through us obeying scripture when we don't feel like it, but having that high regard for scripture and authority in our lives, then this hopefully will flow out of that. Our regard for one another will flow out of that.

Ryan: I'd like to spend a little bit of time teasing out what exactly this could look like. So when you have a high regard for one another, I think you-

- Selena:** Make coffee for the other person in the morning?
- Ryan:** Frankly, maybe. That could be it.
- Selena:** It's a big thing to me and you.
- Ryan:** One of my things, and you know this, is if I'm... oftentimes I'm up earlier, I'm studying, reading-
- Selena:** N.
- Ryan:** It switches, but I'm mostly up early because of the baby. And if you come down and sometimes you're in a bit of a fog because it's the morning time and it's probably like 5:30 in the morning and kids and all that, it really speaks to me if you're like, "Good morning," as opposed to uhh, where's the coffee.
- Selena:** I do not. Some morning.
- Ryan:** Probably once or twice. I don't know enough for me to know that I care about you don't do that.
- Selena:** It is amazing. I think we're even training our kids in this and just acknowledging one another when you enter a room, greeting one another.
- Ryan:** Speaking to each other face to face, not shouting across the house. That to me is a measure of high regard.
- Selena:** Sometimes I have my hands in things and I have to shout, Ryan.
- Ryan:** And I'll come running.
- Selena:** Then you come running.
- Ryan:** As you wish.
- Selena:** As you wish.
- Ryan:** So being slow to speak. So asking each other, you know, what do you think about this? Responding thoughtfully, not always with the knee-jerk reaction. That is a sign of having high regard and respect in the ways we've discussed or one another.

Selena: And having an admiration for one another and appreciating each other, being grateful and acknowledging that, telling each other what you're grateful for.

Ryan: Another thing is recognizing when you've genuinely sinned against each other and having a heart of repentance over that sin and in some sense, grieving the sin. It could be a bigger thing that is causing you to repent. It could be also, "Man, I'm really sorry for the way I spoke to you this morning. I was in a rush."

Selena: Or didn't speak to you.

Ryan: "I was in a hurry, and that's no excuse. I should have slowed down and spoken to you better. Because I value you."

Selena: So good. I like when you say those things.

Ryan: But see, that is a number of functions that disarms that tension. You remember we talk about transparency all the time. It gets it out in the open. And now you're dealing with it, but you're dealing with it in a way that's actually going to draw you closer together.

Selena: And I think another way to highlight high regard is to look at the contrast of what does 'low regard' look like or produce in each other. If there's a low respect for each other, you're going to see that in the words that you say or don't say. And the way you act towards one another, there's usually little to no consideration for the other person.

I think you can probably think of either moments in your own marriage or couples in your life that live this way, which is so sad and heartbreaking. There's typically a lack of appreciation, a lack of encouragement, which again, translates into poor communication which will then trickle down into frustration, anger, bitterness sets in resentment. Then you've got this distance, right, you've got this drift and then you're left kind of feeling roommate, feeling like roommates rather than lovers.

Ryan: Another thing that comes to mind is how you're speaking of one another when you're not together.

Selena: Together, yeah.

Ryan: Do you find that you routinely complaining about your spouse to your parents or to your friends or to your hair person? I'm serious. And the way you're speaking about... and not just complaining, but are you thinking and speaking of them in a way that shows low regard for them? That's a warning light. Because that means there's a greater crack in the foundation than perhaps

you realize. Not that you gloss over things, but we don't just expose our spouse in a way that is humiliating and showing low regard, but you can-

Selena: To just anybody.

Ryan: If you need genuine help, then that's another thing.

Selena: You said this when we were talking about when you have a low regard for your spouse, you typically are like in this habit of assuming the worst about them. You're reading into their motivation. You're just assuming the worst, which we kind of talked about that, how we see ourselves anecdotally. The space of being unhealthy is when we just start assuming like, "Well, clearly he doesn't care. I asked him to do this and he didn't do it. So he must not love me." There's some big leaps in assumptions.

Ryan: A good friend of mine, John Michael, he talks about man pouting and how that's not a good thing to do. A lot of guys if they're feeling deprived in the bedroom department, they'll start to pout and that will turn into, she's just, you know, whatever. And it just descends from there.

That's not something that I do a lot of. Maybe in the past I would have done more of that, but Lord has grown me. But I find myself realizing that, okay, in those moments when we've missed each other in some way, it's not productive, nor is it true for me to think that you are actively trying to withhold intimacy from me. Instead, I can lean back into my high regard for you and say, "Listen, this is my wife. I know her character. I know she loves me. I know she is covenantally minded. I know that she's would never consciously withhold from me. It's probably the fact that she's tired or we've been busy or she's got a lot on her mind."

I can be generous with how I'm interpreting the situation. And that is a sign of high regard. Low regard, like you said, is the opposite.

Selena: Also, if we have a low regard for one another, there's usually a lack of laughter, which leads us into number two.

Ryan: Yeah. Well, I would say mutual laughter.

Selena: Mutual laughter, yeah.

Ryan: You have low regard and laugh at your spouse.

Selena: There it is.

Ryan: By the way, laughing at you yesterday it wasn't because I had low regard for you.

Selena: No, I know that. I did. We were playing baseball with the girls. First of all, super cute and funny. They laid out the bases like everywhere.

Ryan: The first base is like way off. It's like 80 feet.

Selena: We're not the athletic family. Okay. We have fun. But I tried to run in my shoes that just like slip on and our grasses uneven ground. I just fell over trying to steal second. I was trying to steal second and I was so sure that I was going to and then I fell flat on my face and I laughed really hard. It was great.

Ryan: I think you almost scorpioned. Your feet almost touched the ground.

Selena: Maybe that's why I was a little sore today. Clearly, we laugh a lot on this podcast and this video.

Ryan: In our lives.

Selena: In our lives. It's been very good for us. The Office is a show that has been a part of our marriage for a very long time. I don't think it would make it if it was introduced to the world today, but it has been grandfathered in to our lives and to this world.

We do have a few episodes on the power of laughter. We call it the secret weapon of your marriage. Proverbs talks about how the cheerful of heart has a continual feast and a joyful heart is good medicine. All across the board, psychological professionals, all the doctors are like, laughter is so good for you. It boosts your health, boosts all the relationships.

Ryan: Literally no one would say anything opposite. They would say, "You're laughing too much. You better stop. You're going to give yourself a heart attack." They would not say that.

Selena: No.

Ryan: It's always an indicator of good health. Of course, it's not just because we happen to be that way. It's because it's the way that the Lord designed it.

Selena: Because even funniness and humor can get old if there's no regard for one another, if there's no love for one another. It usually just turns into sarcasm or something. Low form of communication like that.

- Ryan:** We just watched a video. It was Dude Dad. She had the mask on.
- Selena:** Yeah, the red-light mask.
- Ryan:** It's so hilarious. We'll watch that kind of thing and I'll share it with her via text or whatever. Then that'll become more fodder for our mutual laughter. You just find ways to laugh together. Typically, media is really easy for that.
- Selena:** I think laughing with one another...
- Ryan:** Or falling on your face-
- Selena:** I can do that. Laughing together. There's been times in our marriage where I'm super angry and he starts laughing. And that is not productive.
- Ryan:** You're hilarious when you're angry.
- Selena:** Then he gets hot sandwiches thrown at his head.
- Ryan:** That's early days right there.
- Selena:** I'm telling you. That's what I said. I think that being able to laugh together is such an indicator of health. It can come from a place of joy. We have joy given to us in the Lord because He has given us life. I feel like when I can't laugh or when I take myself too seriously, I just need to stop and I need to start looking around and start counting my blessings. I need to start being thankful like Psalm 16:11. "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."
- Again, we can laugh and have joy together, but without the underlying foundation of our beliefs and our shared faith, that will get old, it will get shallow, it will get tiresome. But because we love one another, because we have a savior that we both submit to, we both live under the authority of and we live in that order of authority and we have this order of our love, there's fruitfulness in the laughter.
- Ryan:** I think there's some other kind of ancillary fruit that I think is really fun with this. One thing to maybe try... We've never called it this in our marriage. I would call it being locked in. What I mean by that is next time you're in a crowd-
- Selena:** Inside jokes.

Ryan: Yeah. You're in a crowd, you're at church, you're at someone's house at a gathering of some sort, be locked in with one another in your own little world. What I mean by that is I can cast you a glance. I can think of a few right now off the top of my head that would guarantee that you would smile. Whatever you're at, you would lift your heart. Some of this stuff is a little inappropriate, but it's me and you. It's not inappropriate for us. It's funny because we get it. We're married. You can sneak a little cop of feel. You locked in. That's a form of humor.

You don't want to be gratuitous or crude. That's not what we're advocating for. The point is you're in your own world in a sense because you alone share this covenant, you alone share this connection. Sometimes that's the quickest way to remind one another, Hey, I know we're here with all these people, but really I'm here with you.

Selena: It's great. How can you laugh more as a couple? Just like you said there, I think we can smile more with one another. Sometimes when my kids are grumpy and I'm feeling grumpy, I will just give them the biggest, cheesiest smile. We just kind of laugh. Like cheesy, just smile as big as you can. Then they start giggling and laughing. It kind of breaks the ice.

We do have one on here that's just like watch *The Office*.

Ryan: Whatever it is that gets you.

Selena: Whatever is just funny. And know what's funny and what's not. Like we said, sarcasm is not. It's humor at someone else's expense. It's not edifying.

Ryan: Because someone could be like, Yeah, it's so shallow and worldly or whatever. Think about kings of old back in the day.

Selena: They had a jester.

Ryan: They're like, "Oh, my heart is sorrowful. I need someone to lift my spirits. Bring in the jester." They'd bring him in. Then the jester would either survive because he made the king laugh or he'd be put to death if he couldn't. Maybe in some cases.

Selena: A lot of pressure.

Ryan: I think of Solomon when he's writing... I think it was Solomon writing the Psalms. He's reminding his soul, why are you downcast, O my soul? We need reminders at times that we have reasons to rejoice.

Selena: Reasons for hope.

Ryan: Sure. The deepest reasons to rejoice are in Christ and the hope we have in Him and all the promises we have in our salvation in Christ and the benefits of our salvation that have been given to us in Him. Our flesh still clamors and clings to bring those things not into reality. In wisdom and in the spirit, in the spirit in a sense, we can say, Why are you downcast, O my soul? Rejoice. You have a wife.

I always call you the wife of my youth because you truly are the wife of my youth. I look at you and as we're aging together, as life is advancing together, that is a sweet thing, but I have to remind my heart of the joy and gladness to be had in there. Otherwise I'll just get caught up in the grinding and we will drift. We will drift.

In terms of a healthy marriage, laughter is a great indicator of whether or not your marriage is in a good spot. The cool thing is if you realize you're not laughing together, it's one of the more actionable, tangible things you can do to begin to draw closer to one another.

Another quick thing before we move on is know what's funny and what's not. There are instances that I think sarcasm is hilarious.

Selena: In marriage?

Ryan: In marriage, not so much. I think it just tends to be a really annoying thing.

Selena: Annoying.

Ryan: I'm conflating sarcasm with dry humor. I really do enjoy dry humor, but sarcasm not so much because some sarcasm just feels like, mm, whatever. Just be aware of that. You don't want to just make yourself laugh. The whole point is to connect through laughter. If you're doing something that's making you laugh. Guys, unwholesome, crass, joking. I don't think we need to have G-rated marriages all the time. I don't think that. But there is a sense in which you cross a line and you start dishonoring your wife, you start dishonoring the Lord, you start dishonoring your marriage bed, you start dishonoring her body perhaps.

There's a lot of crass paths you can go down as a husband that I think are going to pass the point of productivity and they're going to become unproductive. So you have to be discerning in that, be spirit-filled in that. Read the Bible so you have a good sense of what purity looks like.

- Selena:** Amen.
- Ryan:** Anything else to add to that?
- Selena:** Nope.
- Ryan:** Okay. The third one, the indicator of a healthy marriage. Of course, there's more indicators than these.
- Selena:** Of course.
- Ryan:** Of course.
- Selena:** We never claim.
- Ryan:** But we'll give you three because we have 35 minutes and we're a podcast. So there you go.
- Selena:** These are three I think that have been indicators to us probably the most.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And the third one, which Selena mentioned at the outset is a healthy, intimate life. Healthy, intimate life. So, Selena, what does that mean? What do you mean by healthy, intimate life? Because this was your point.
- Selena:** This is not my point. He came up with all three. Healthy, intimate life, I think often flows out of an already healthy marriage. Again, they're descriptive, but also there's some prescriptiveness to it. Maybe you're in a season where you need to cultivate this area of your marriage and the beauty that is, you know, the garden of your marriage. Your marriage bed, it needs to be tended to.
- And so no doubt if you make the effort and you are working towards a consistent, frequent, intimate life with one another, there will be fruit there. Okay. And so we can trust that and we can step out in faith. Because this is one of the hardest parts of marriage for many couples. We've talked about it in many episodes. In terms of actual time it takes, it's not very long usually, but it is such a big part of your marriage. It plays such a role. And we just can't underestimate God's design and purposes for it. I don't know if you want to talk about some of those purposes or if you want to-
- Ryan:** I think we can... Obviously, we're talking about normative, what's norm, like average. Okay. So there's lots of room for whatabouts in here. What about, you know, if you've got some sort of health problem? There's certainly circumstances that would be outside of this, you know, what's considered normal. So just hear that we're aware of that, that there isn't a one size fits all

for what a healthy, intimate life is. We don't have a biblical prescription for you should have sex, you know, this many times a week, this many times a month, and it should be this duration. We don't have that. Therefore you have a healthy sex life. But we do have the command to not withhold. We do have the imperative to become one flesh.

Selena: I'm so grateful that God didn't just say, okay, three days, four days a week, like it's just another thing to check off the list, right? He's more interested in our hearts being unified and our bodies being unified. There's just so much more to the design than just like do this, A plus B equals C. It's thank you Lord. Right?

Ryan: And in terms of it being an indicator specifically for marriage is that I can't, and I'm shooting from the hip here, I can't think of any other activity that is exclusively for within a marriage. Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Can you think of anything else? I can't. It's truly the marker. It is the consummating act of a marital covenant. And we've said this before that in a sense, it's the renewing of that covenant. And some have pushed back on the idea of renewal because the covenant didn't go anywhere. I get that. I like the concept of renewal because it's not replacing, it's refreshing, if you will, a reminding of the marriage covenant. So it's important.

If I'm talking to a couple, just anecdotally, and if you're listening to this or you're watching and the couple comes to me and says, "Yeah, we only have sex about once a month or once a year," and the reason they're sharing it is to illustrate that it's not enough, then I automatically know like you're not in a healthy spot. It doesn't mean you're doomed. It doesn't mean that you're terrible, horrible sinners.

Selena: There's some tending that needs to happen.

Ryan: It just means that there's more to be had and there's more richness for you to get from your marriage.

Selena: And some of that richness comes from the purposes of sex. And I think we've done one or two episodes that are called the purposes of sex. Some of those are to offer comfort to one another, to maintain unity. We've been talking about that. It strengthens a marriage. It helps ward off any sexual temptation or a potential affair. It's-

Ryan: Adultery.

Selena: Adultery, yeah. It's to be fruitful, to make children, to procreate. This is the path that God has given to us. And so-

Ryan: And just frankly, we talked about joking. Not that you joke while having sex.

Selena: You can have fun.

Ryan: But sex is a fun thing.

Selena: Thank you.

Ryan: It's an activity that is to be enjoyed. But she didn't have that in the list, which I find to be ironic.

Selena: It was just an assumption that was already there.

Ryan: It's so enjoyable.

Selena: Anyways. Tend to your garden. You will see the flowers grow if it's being tended to.

Ryan: One key here, and I don't think it's completely relative, but I'm going to say this. You need to be on the same page about what is like... if you're on your game, if your garden is completely being tended to in the area of intimacy, what does that look like for your marriage? Not everybody has the exact same drive, desire, all that. And a lot of couples, frankly, are not able to have those conversations. I'm telling you, fierce couple, if you're able just to have that conversation, I think you're like 80 or 90% of the way there, to be honest. Just have the conversation.

Selena: Listen to one of our sex podcasts. That sounds terrible. Listen to one of the podcasts we've done talking about sex, and you can start having that conversation.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: Should I cut that?

Ryan: That's fine. Yeah. And you just gotta be willing to ask your spouse with the desire to earnestly hear what they're saying. Husband, wife, I would ask my wife, what's ideal? What's an ideal sex rhythm for you?

Selena: You can't do it. You can't do it.

Ryan: You're looking at me just waiting for me to say that's something that you can laugh at. You're a pervert.

Selena: I am not.

Ryan: You're not. I'm kidding. We're joking. We're laughing. Healthy.

Selena: Ha haha.

Ryan: Hey. So there you have it. Three signs. Again, these aren't the only signs of a healthy marriage, but in our minds, in the fierce marriage world-

Selena: In our experience.

Ryan: In our experience, these are three sure signs of a healthy couple. The first one is that you have high regard for one another. The second one is that you laugh together, consistently. And the third one is that you have a healthy, intimate life.

So we hope this episode has been helpful to you. We hope that you have found maybe one or two things you can take to your spouse. You can talk about it if you want. A lot of couples are writing in saying they listen to this together. It's kind of their weekly marriage check-in. So give that a shot if you haven't done that before. But our hope is that this would not just point you closer together, but point you ultimately to Christ, His purposes in marriage, and the various aspects of the things we would talk about.

So speaking of Christ, if you don't know who He is, if you don't know if you're a Christian or not, here's what it means to be a Christian. You place your full faith in Christ for the salvation of your eternal soul, knowing that you are fully condemned in your own sin, you can't do enough good to override the affront that our sin is to the eternally holy and mighty God. We have shaken our fist at Him, and we have rebelled against Him. And our only hope for being reconciled to Him is to have a mediator, somebody to pay the price for us.

Who is that? Well, it happens to be God Himself in the flesh, in the personal work of Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life. He died a sinner's death on our behalf, bearing the wrath and shame of our sin, and then giving to us His righteousness when He rose from the grave on the third day.

If you believe all that, that means that you are a Christian. And if you don't believe in that, we want you to believe in that because that is the only way to be right with God, to have eternity with Him. We want to call you brother or sister.

So, in order to become a Christian, place your faith in Christ. If you need more information on what that means, first, talk to a friend who's a Christian. Don't just take it from a podcast. You need to get someone in your life who can disciple you, who can read the Bible with you.

If you don't have a friend who's a Christian, we have a website, thenewsisgood.com. It'll point you to a church. There's a church finder there where they will ideally preach from the bible. And prayerfully, you can get into that community and start learning about what it means to be a Christian. So we want that for you.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of marriage. It's a thing that you hold in high regard, so much so that you are culminating all of human history with the wedding of your son with his bride, your church. Lord, indeed, marriage here on earth is an analog somehow of your love for your people. So I pray that we would understand it rightly and that we would live within it righteously for our good, your glory, for the good of our children.

Lord, I pray for the families, the husbands, the wives listening to this who are struggling, and they're feeling hopeless. God, infuse them with hope. Spirit be with them. Give them peace. Lord, I pray you'd also give them a step forward, some action they can take today that would get them on the right path. It's in your Son's name we pray. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Amen. Amen. As a reminder, if you've enjoyed this content, if you want to see more of this content created, you can help with that by going to fiercemarriage.com/partner. Thank you if you're already a fellow. We couldn't do this without you. We are grateful for you. We enjoy knowing that we're not on this mission alone, that we have people that are part of it with us. So thank you. Go to fiercemarriage.com/partner.

And, that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Psalm 16:11
- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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