

Swimmer-Activist Riley Gaines Fighting for Godly Principles

Championing the cause to preserve the integrity of women's sports, Riley Gaines Barker, a former competitive collegiate swimmer, has recently undergone a profound spiritual awakening that has fortified her faith and emboldened her stance.

Engaging in a heartfelt conversation with Pastor Gary Hamrick of Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia, on July 9, the 23-year-old NCAA All-American recounted her journey into the public eye as she takes a stand against legislation permitting men who identify as female to participate in women's sports.

During this talk before the congregation, the 23-year-old NCAA All-American shared her journey into the spotlight as she took a stand against laws permitting men who identify as female to participate in women's sports.

"I have always been spiritual, but this past year, I experienced a spiritual awakening. I have witnessed how God moves through people, how He has His hand on me in this situation, in this fight," Barker testified. She emphasized that she has also recognized the opposition, believing it to be a spiritual battle, where moral values clash with evil influences.

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Recalling her college days, Barker remembered facing a challenging situation when she had to compete against a transgender athlete named Lia Thomas, who formerly swam on the men's team at the University of Pennsylvania before transitioning to the women's team during his senior year.

During her testimony, Barker recounted the uncomfortable

reality of sharing the locker room with Thomas, a 6'4" 22-year-old male, where they had to undress inches away from each other. This situation left her feeling uneasy and concerned about the implications for women's privacy and fairness in sports.

Despite both athletes achieving the exact same time in a race, Thomas was awarded the trophy, while Barker was asked to step aside, further fueling her resolve to no longer remain silent and to stand up for the truth.

Barker courageously shared her experiences before the Senate Judiciary Committee, testifying that female athletes who raise their voices against competing against transgender athletes face a barrage of derogatory labels, such as "transphobic" and "homophobic," designed to silence them.

In addition to the personal challenges she has encountered, Barker revealed that Thomas' teammates were coerced into attending mandatory LGBTQ education meetings, where they were made to feel guilty for being "cisgender" and advised against expressing any objections to the policy, lest they suffer consequences such as the loss of scholarships and competition opportunities.

Throughout her journey, Barker found solace and strength in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us." The verse has become a guiding light for her during the emotional toll of the fight she is engaged in, reminding her that the present sufferings pale in comparison to the greater purpose she is striving to achieve.

Barker's faith plays a central role in her commitment to this cause. As a devout Christian, she believes in the inherent design of men and women by God. Scripture emphasizes in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

This foundational understanding informs her conviction to protect the purity and fairness of women's sports.

Through her courageous testimony and ongoing activism, Barker hopes to inspire others to stand firm in their beliefs, even when facing opposition. As she continues to champion the truth and uphold the legacy of women's rights in sports, she is also fighting to uphold godly principles upon which the very fabric of creation is built. {eoa}

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