

Should Lia Thomas Be the NCAA's 'Woman of the Year'?

Transgender swimmer Lia Thomas dominated headlines this week when the NCAA released its nominations for "Woman of the Year" in sports on July 18. The trans community and political progressives cheered, while many Americans were outraged that a person who was considered a male three years ago is now winning competitions for the University of Pennsylvania's women's swim team.

Riley Gaines, a female swimmer from Kentucky who was also nominated for the prize, called the nomination of Lia Thomas "yet another slap in the face to women." Maggie Bowen, a retired championship swimmer for Auburn University, decried the NCAA's decision by saying: "They are more impressed with a male-bodied athlete competing and beating females in their sport. I personally don't find that very impressive."

Tennis star Martina Navratilova was even more blunt when she tweeted to the NCAA: "What is wrong with you?!!!!?"

Meanwhile, Lia Thomas—who was known as Will Thomas until three years ago—has told reporters that life has been difficult because of all the public scrutiny. Many people say the swimmer, who is 22, is a cheater who should get out of women's sports and just compete against other transgender athletes.

How are we supposed to view this controversy as believers in Christ? How can we show the love of Jesus to transgender people while at the same time promoting fairness and upholding basic moral standards? Here are three points to remember:

1. We should pray against the deception that controls our culture. We shouldn't be surprised when we see alarming cultural trends that undermine family, healthy sexuality and every other form of righteousness. First John 5:19 says: "We

know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” Satan uses lies to manipulate people, and these days he is using the academic community, the media, political systems and even medical and pharmaceutical companies to war against all that is good. This is not a secret conspiracy—it’s out in the open for all to see. We must pray that the devil’s tactics are exposed and defeated.

2. We should develop compassion for people who struggle with gender confusion. Before Lia Thomas began the transition from male to female, he struggled with depression because he didn’t identify fully as a male. So while in college he began taking hormones, grew his hair long, lost some height and even shrunk a shoe size. He began identifying as a she, changed his name from Will to Lia and then switched from the men’s swim team to the women’s.

The world says we should applaud any person who chooses to change their gender. Progressive psychologists say the best thing we can do for a transgender person is to affirm their identity, whether they feel they are male, female, “non-binary,” “gender fluid,” “queer” or some other category. This view stands in direct opposition to the laws of biology, which say there are only two genders. It also contradicts the Bible, which reveals that those two genders are part of God’s creation order, and that gender is not fluid but fixed.

Psychologists also warn parents that if they don’t affirm their child’s preferred gender identity, they may kill themselves (Lia Thomas admitted feeling suicidal thoughts before his transition). This creates a type of emotional blackmail, forcing parents to do whatever is necessary to keep their children happy. The sad reality is that many young people who decide to take hormones or get gender reassignment surgery later regret it, and face even worse emotional problems.

Before you lash out at a person who struggles with gender

dysphoria, ask God to give you His compassion for them. Don't use harmful slurs or make demeaning comments about transgender people; instead, be aware that they need the healing of Jesus, and be prepared to share His love with them.

3. Work to safeguard the rights of those who are harmed by the trans agenda. Eighteen states have enacted laws or issued statewide rules that bar or limit transgender athletes from participation in sports. Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union are fighting these laws, claiming that they are discriminatory. But many women's organizations say allowing biological males to compete in women's sports is denying women the chance to compete fairly. Some fear that women's sports will become a thing of the past if "trans women" keep winning competitions and awards.

Common sense should tell us that just because someone "identifies" as a different gender doesn't give them the right to trample on another person's freedoms or opportunities. In many ways the trans community has hijacked this contentious debate, and they are forcing their agenda on everyone else. Hopefully, in the end, fairness, common sense and Christian compassion will prevail.

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