Riley Gaines

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[00:00:00] **Riley:** [00:01:00] I was kind of cowering in fear and I was, um, Waiting for someone else to say something, but it hit me.

[00:01:08] **Riley:** We can't, we can't wait for someone else to take a stance in the truth because that's how we've gotten here

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[00:01:13] Today's guest is a hero or an historical figure, at least one in the making. That often happens when people start to stand up for truth and they fight against the wrong that they see so very clearly right in front of their eyes. Oh, other people will see it, but not everybody has the courage or will.[00:02:00]

[00:02:00] Take the opportunity to walk out in faith and do what's right. We're facing a battle right now. It's no longer left versus right. It's right versus wrong. And those that will stand up and speak out, they will go down in history as people who were on the right side of the truth.

[00:02:29] Riley Gaines is an athlete. She is very smart, a bright, competitive young woman who has found herself. In the middle of a media circus, a storm that she never expected to be in. In fact, right now, if she's supposed to be at dental school, instead, she's in the middle of a culture fight, a battle, the likes of which we haven't seen in [00:03:00] quite a while, probably never in the history of this country.

[00:03:06] And yet she's standing up one of the most unlikely individuals to do so. She joins us on today's podcast.

[00:03:16] **Justin:** Riley, welcome in. I appreciate you being here with us.

[00:03:18] **Riley:** Of course. Thank you so much. I, I'm glad to be on. I really am.

[00:03:23] **Justin:** So I wanna, uh, first say thank you for standing up, uh, uh, and, and for fighting. I've got two. Little girls, uh, two and a half and six months now that are Wow. Uh, gonna follow in those footsteps one of these days.

[00:03:39] **Justin:** So I know that, you know, it's not always easy. You're, you're, you're in the spotlight, the limelight right now. And people may think, well, you know, it's great to have the attention and the recognition and of course, but you're going through quite a bit right now. Um, I just wanna give you, uh, a bit of a, a thank you on, on their behalf and, uh, and hopefully.

[00:03:59] **Justin:** You, you'll [00:04:00] hear stories, uh, about people who you're going to affect and impact, uh, that you may never know or, or ever get a chance to meet?

[00:04:08] **Riley:** Absolutely. Um, I hear it every day. I get messages from parents, I get messages from other athletes who, um, you know, regardless of sport division, what age, all over it.

[00:04:21] **Riley:** It's something that's not limited to a specific category here. Who really just thank me. They don't feel comfortable enough to speak out about this. They don't feel confident, they feel scared. Um, they're terrified of the retaliation of speaking out. And so I'm very fortunate that I'm able to keep that into perspective.

[00:04:40] **Riley:** Um, a lot of people would let the negative way on them more than the positive, but I did the exact opposite. Um, the positive to me, It's so much more powerful. It's so much louder. The presence is, is is so much greater than that of the negative. And I'm very fortunate that I can keep that into perspective and understand just how [00:05:00] many people agree with the stance that I'm taking and just how many people I'm fighting for.

[00:05:04] **Riley:** Like your, like your daughters.

[00:05:07] **Justin:** Let me ask you cuz I want to come back. Uh, to that and, and see if you can maybe give some, uh, some inspiration or some tips, some ideas to people that that could stand up. Because it, it, I, I think we do need to empower more people. People need to feel more emboldened to be able to do those things, but it takes a little bit.

[00:05:28] **Justin:** So I wanna talk about first of the, so before we get into all that, let's talk about everything you've been through. All of it. Uh, and, and, and I don't even know where to start with this, honestly, but, um, let's start maybe at the first time you experienced the, the craziness, the insanity of what you had to face, um, with, with going up against, uh, biological male, Leah Thomas and, and competing in the sport and what, what, what that was like.

[00:05:59] **Riley:** So the first time [00:06:00] I ever even heard of Leah Thomas, um, It was my senior year. I, I swam at the University of Kentucky and I had made it my goal this year, my, my last year of competing to win a national title, meaning become the fastest woman in the country in my respective event. And about midway through my senior season, so in about November of 2021, I was right on pace to achieve my goal.

[00:06:23] **Riley:** Um, I was ranked third in the country behind one amazing female athlete who I knew very well because like in most sports, Your top tier athletes, you know, of each other, um, regardless of where you compete in the country, because you've grown up competing against each other. And so the girl who was in second, I, I knew very well, but the person who was ranked first I had never heard of before.

[00:06:45] **Riley:** And of course, this was the first time I became aware of a summer named Leah Thomas. But for all I knew at the time upon just seeing this name, because we didn't compete against each other directly. The first time I heard of Leah Thomas. I thought this was a girl who came out of [00:07:00] nowhere senior year to post the fastest times in the nation by multiple seconds.

[00:07:05] **Riley:** Um, there was a lot of this that didn't really make sense, one of which being, um, as I mentioned, this was a senior, which was rare. Two, this was a swimmer from University of Pennsylvania, um, which is not historically a school that produces fast swimmers. Three, this person was ranked at the top and everything from the a hundred freestyle, which is a sprint.

[00:07:25] **Riley:** And all of the freestyle events in between until the mile, which is long distance. Mm-hmm. So if you think about your Olympic runners, your best 200 meter runners, not your best marathon runner, because those are totally different systems, but that's what we were seeing in this swimmer, never once occurring.

[00:07:41] **Riley:** To me it was a male, because I thought that was so farfetched. I was more apt to believe that this was just some phenome that no one has ever seened the likes of before. But I was very quickly proven wrong when the, when an article came out, a few days after these nation leading times were posted, disclosing very briefly, Leah Thomas [00:08:00] is formerly Will Thomas and Swam three years on the men's team at University of Pennsylvania before deciding to transition to the women's team.

[00:08:06] **Riley:** Wow. And so when I read this, I of course was shocked and I of course, um, You know, was kind of baffled by this, but truthfully, I felt a sense of relief because I was able to look up who will Thomas was because I was curious, was this a man who was already ranking at the top now continuing to rank at the top, which is of course not what we saw.

[00:08:28] **Riley:** Um, this was a man who ranked 462nd at best, among the men the year prior. Um, which is why I felt a sense of relief because I thought the NCAA would see it exactly how I saw it, exactly how anyone with the brain would see it. Nothing opinionated, nothing hateful. Mm-hmm. Just the facts of it. This was a mediocre man who's now trailing every other woman in the country by multiple seconds, but that's not how the NCAA saw it.

[00:08:53] **Riley:** They saw absolutely nothing wrong with allowing Leah Thomas to swim with the women. Mm-hmm. And so [00:09:00] I'll kind of walk you through that NCAA championships.

[00:09:03] **Justin:** Can I ask you a question, because I wanna go back to before we do, when did you start swimming? How old were you? I

[00:09:10] **Riley:** started swimming when I was four and I stopped swimming when I was 22, so I dedicated 18 years of my life to my sport.

[00:09:17] **Riley:** Um,

[00:09:17] **Justin:** so, so when you say you started swimming, do you mean like com, when did you, because you competitively there's like throwing them in the water right? Teaching 'em how to swim, but, but when did you competitively really start to swim? So, you're right.

[00:09:32] **Riley:** When I, by the time, so when I was four to eight years old, I just did the typical summer swim.

[00:09:37] **Riley:** But when I turned eight, my coach, my summer coach, she was like, you know, you're eight years old. Of course she's telling my parents, you know, she's eight, but she has a lot of talent. You can just tell, um, you should really consider putting her in year round, swimming. So when I was eight years old, that's when I, um, started practicing two hours every single day.

[00:09:59] **Riley:** And of [00:10:00] course it only gets harder from there. By the time you're in middle school, high school, you're practicing before school. You go to school, you go straight from school, back to practice. You go home, you eat your dinner, you do your homework, you ice your shoulder, you go to bed, but then you wake up and you do it all again.

[00:10:14] **Riley:** The next day. At the collegiate level, you're practicing six hours in the water every single day, swimming almost 10 miles every single day. Um, three of those hours are before 8:00 AM. Um, so of course you have your sport specific training, but you also have your weights, your weight training. You have your diet.

[00:10:32] **Riley:** You have to be concerned about your sleep schedule. You have to be concerned about your physical rehabilitation, not to mention the social sacrifices. Yeah. Um, you don't get to go to prom. You don't get to go on vacation. You don't get to have sleepovers with your friends in college. You don't get to come home for summer.

[00:10:47] **Riley:** You don't get to come home for Christmas. You don't get to come home for Thanksgiving. Um, To say my world revolved around my sport as an understatement. Mm-hmm. Um, it's impossible to put into words the amount of time and [00:11:00] dedication and sacrifices you have to make to compete at that level, which is the highest level, um, that NCAA championships were, we were forced to compete against Leah Thomas.

[00:11:09] **Riley:** That's the fastest meet in the world. Um, so it's a lot of, a lot of effort that goes into competing at that level.

[00:11:17] **Justin:** I want to give people the kind of the idea of what you go through or what anyone who is at that guest stage of, of, of competition and what, what you actually trade for that and, and what you sacrifice for that and you're and large part of life.

[00:11:36] **Justin:** I want people to understand what we're really looking at here, because when you think about having it all stolen or taken away, You have to think about in terms of all the things that you gave up, all those things that you just, and I, I know that just barely scratches the surface of what you've gone through, but be it's because you loved it.

[00:11:56] **Justin:** And, and I, you know, uh, uh, I've [00:12:00] been through that since, uh, you know, in various different ways with what I do. I love, um, but you give up a lot to, to do those things. And you, um, I don't think the average person really kind of can grasp that.

[00:12:14] **Riley:** No, they don't. And I, I actually really appreciate how you mentioned that because the average person, I mean, you can't grasp it.

[00:12:22] **Riley:** You can't quite understand the lifelong journey it is to get to that point unless you do it. Um, and that's something that's actually extremely frustrating is the people who are. Especially at, at, at the legislative level, at both the state and federal level, these people who are working towards, um, not protecting women and girls in sports.

[00:12:46] **Riley:** It's people who have never played a sport in their life and they don't understand the value in the time that you put into competing. Um, because of course it's about athletic opportunity and it's about success and winning and all of those things. But it's [00:13:00] bigger than that, the, the benefits of women's sports.

[00:13:03] **Riley:** Um, so I appreciate you, you asking me about that, that is really important to the whole story and the whole setup of the story. I,

[00:13:11] **Justin:** I think it's, it's so crucial that people really get a grasp on what is actually happening. I. Um, totally because, you know, the, a lot of this stuff is getting chopped up and it's in sound bites, and there's only so much we can take in.

[00:13:25] **Justin:** So a story like this, even I think is, is, yeah, I mean, it's pretty obvious on the service, but you really don't get into the, the, the, I guess the core of it. So that's why I wanted it to go there with you. So, um, imagine now a, a world where all of this I is taken away and, and Riley, you've. You know, you've, you've seen this, uh, I can't imagine just emotionally what that is.

[00:13:52] **Justin:** The competition part is like, but there's another part of this. There's a whole nother element to this where, uh, people [00:14:00] have to understand that if that's not enough, you, you actually have to be, are you in the same locker room with Leah

[00:14:06] **Riley:** Thomas? Yeah, we were, um, we were not forewarned we would be, no one asked for our consent.

[00:14:13] **Riley:** We did not give our consent. The only way we became aware we would be sharing this changing space was by seeing Leah Thomas undress firsthand. That's how we became aware of the situation, and to be totally in the vein of being totally explicit and transparent here, Leah was still fully intact and exposing male genitalia while simultaneously of course, we were undressing and, and I'll kind of set the scene.

[00:14:39] **Riley:** A swimming locker room is not a place of modesty. I mean, these suits that you put on, it takes about, they're, I mean, they're so skin tight. It takes about 15 minutes to, to really poke and prod and mm-hmm. Get all your skin rolls into these suits. Um, 15 minutes of which you're fully exposed. Um, the best word to describe the feeling that [00:15:00] we all felt, um, of course it's uncomfortable, it's awkward, it's embarrassing.

[00:15:04] **Riley:** But really it's traumatic. Uh, and really it's a sense of betrayal. The people who were supposed to be protecting us, granted we were adults, um, all of the girls competing at that meet, I mean, you're 18 to 22 years old, we're adults. But the people who are in place to protect us from things like this happening, whether that be our parents, whether that be the coaches, the NCAA people with political power, um, they failed measurably.

[00:15:31] **Riley:** Um, It. That's why I say it felt like betrayal. And after I found out we were sharing this locker room space, I immediately left the locker room and I went up to one of the NCAA officials on the pool deck and I said, how, you know, I understand the guidelines for the meet, um, that allowed Leah to compete with us, which the guidelines were just 12 months of hormone suppressant, which is, I mean, we know that's not enough to mitigate male advantage, clearly.

[00:15:57] **Riley:** Mm-hmm. Um, but I said, I wanna know the guidelines that allowed [00:16:00] him into our locker room. I wanna know word for word what they say, how is this acceptable? And he responded back to me word for word. He said, oh, we actually got around this by making the locker rooms unisex. And so I'm sitting there thinking unisex.

[00:16:16] **Riley:** So any man could have walked into our locker room, any coach, any official, any pervert who wanted to come see women undress could have freely walked in. And bare minimum, we weren't forewarned. We weren't told about this. We could have potentially made arrangements for ourselves had we known about this, but we didn't even know about this.

[00:16:36] **Riley:** And that's again why I say it felt like betrayal. Yeah. They were willing to throw our privacy, our safety, our comfort, our feelings are our equal opportunities right out of the window and the guys of being inclusive and kind and loving and accepting and tolerant. But in reality, it's not kind to ask a girl to undress in front of a man that is not kind and it is not inclusive.

[00:16:58] **Riley:** To ask us to [00:17:00] smile and step aside and allow these men onto our podiums, taking away our opportunities. That is exclusive and it's exclusive to the very female athletes who Title IX was passed to protect.

[00:17:10] **Justin:** Yeah. Um, um, this is, this is obvious. I think that most people who look at this isn't mean as a father.

[00:17:16] **Justin:** I can imagine, if you're gonna tell me you're coming into the locker room, As a male, uh, with, with my daughters, it's not gonna end well. What was it like for your family going through this? Cause I can't imagine.

[00:17:28] **Riley:** Well, I can tell you my dad is very similar to you. I'm certain. Um, he played in the NFL for a long while, so my dad is a big guy.

[00:17:39] **Riley:** Um, we're from Tennessee, so he's your typical. Conservative, big football player. And when I called him again, I didn't know we were sharing a locker room until we saw it firsthand. And so when I called my dad who was at the meet, he was there watching and I said, dad, He's in our locker room undressing.

[00:17:58] **Riley:** Mm-hmm. He said, Riley, I'm [00:18:00] coming down there and I'm gonna handle this myself. And I said, dad, we already have one man in the locker room. We don't need two. Um, you can't do that. Um, but I can that, that was the reaction of a lot of parents. But yeah, almost unfortunately enough, it was kind of private conversations among the parents.

[00:18:19] **Riley:** They talked amongst themselves and they talked of course to their daughters almost discreetly. But no one was really willing to put a voice to this. I, I think they were willing, I just don't think they knew how. Mm-hmm. There was kind of this level of who do you talk to? Because the people who you would talk to are doing everything in their power.

[00:18:40] **Riley:** To almost cover this up, almost seem as if it's not a big deal. So what do you do? Who do you convey your, your feelings to? Because no one seemed to care about our feelings.

[00:18:49] **Justin:** Yeah. You know, the, the simple solution to this, and I say simple, but it's, it's, it's complicated because of human nature and how we all think and act and, and it's, you know, this is [00:19:00] understandable, but the simple solution is if all the female swimmers or athletes in any sport, wherever this is happening, just refuse to swim.

[00:19:11] **Justin:** Totally. I,

[00:19:13] **Riley:** that's it. I agree. This is something, at first when this happened, I thought, no, we can't ask our women to boycott. You know, they shouldn't have to make sacrifices, they shouldn't have to compromise anything. Um, but now I've realized, especially really, I've come to this realization in the past two or three weeks when this bill was brought forth at the US House of Representatives and every single Democrat voted in opposition of protecting women and girls.

[00:19:40] **Riley:** That's when I realized legislation is of course, a way to make change, but it's, it's not going to happen quick enough. How many Rosa

[00:19:47] **Justin:** Parks, Rosa Parks decided she was gonna sit down on that bus that day and wasn't gonna move? That's what it's gonna take. Absolutely.

[00:19:55] **Riley:** Absolutely it is. And I've come to that realization, and that's the quickest [00:20:00] way.

[00:20:00] **Riley:** It's the quickest way to make change. It's stops women from having to be violated and exploited in the locker room. It stops women from having to get injured in their sport. It stops swimming from having to lose out on opportunities. We, it, it's crucial that we do this and I know it's easier said than done.

[00:20:16] **Riley:** Um, again, women shouldn't have to give up anything, but it's almost necessary. Even male athletes, I think, act or, um, kind of actively calling for men to boycott their competitions. I, I think it's a powerful way to make change. We've seen boycotts, of course, be effective in the past, and, and that's the quickest way to make a statement and to make change.

[00:20:38] **Justin:** Yeah. What are the male counterparts? I don't know how much interaction you guys have, but what other athletes in the, in the male side, what do they say about all this?

[00:20:49] **Riley:** It's interesting, this whole movement because again, in regards to politicians even, and, and representatives and senators, I feel like it's constantly the [00:21:00] women who are fighting against sex-based protections.

[00:21:03] **Riley:** Mm-hmm. Um, majority of the men, even the majority of male athletes, of course, They're more willing to talk about this. They're more willing to say this is wrong. Um, of course, they're not at jeopardy, they're not at stake. Nothing they're doing is under threat. So maybe they're not speaking as much as they should, but they know this is wrong.

[00:21:22] **Riley:** Are you kidding me? Um, women, they tend to be more agreeable. We tend to not want to ruffle feathers or step on toes, but that's exactly how we've gotten here. Um, we need to kind of take this mindset like a male has. And saying enough is enough. Um, men are quicker to do that. They're more apt to do that.

[00:21:41] **Riley:** And we as women, we have to be willing to do that. It's not mean, it's not rude, it's not disrespectful to stand for the truth. Um, anything other than is those things to, to kind of deny objective truth that's hurtful. Who is it benefiting when we're lying to one another? Um, no one. The [00:22:00] answer is no one. So I think being able to say Enough is enough.

[00:22:04] **Riley:** We need to do that. We need to hold the line.

[00:22:06] **Justin:** I wanna talk about the attacks because when you stand up and you, you speak truth, it really disturbs something in certain people. And, uh, you get all the, and, and I know you've seen it, uh, up close and personal, but I mean, they'll call you every ist in the book.

[00:22:21] **Justin:** They think of new things every day to call people, to divide us and distract us and, and, uh, demonize us. But what, what has it been like for you and I just recently, uh, a couple of weeks back, you, you found yourself being physically at the. Other end of, again, a biological male attacking, uh, a

[00:22:39] woman.

[00:22:40] **Riley:** Yeah.

[00:22:41] **Riley:** This has been, um, an eye-opening, eye-opening experience for me because I've realized the links people will go to, to silence you from speaking the truth. Um, I was invited to San Francisco State University to. Speak on my experience of competing against a [00:23:00] male and why I think this is an injustice to women's sports and why it's, it's diminishing the integrity of women's sports.

[00:23:07] **Riley:** And so I went there and I shared my experience. I shared about the locker room, I shared about the silencing that our institutions and universities have been trying desperately to, to implement, to submiss our voices. Um, so again, nothing opinionating, nothing hateful. Exactly my experience. Yet I was met with an ambush, um, protestors from outside the hallway.

[00:23:31] **Riley:** They rushed into the room, they turned off the lights. They physically assaulted myself and others. Um, ultimately, I was escorted out of the room to which we were only met with hundreds of more protestors, so we weren't able to evacuate the building. So instead of being able to leave, I was barricaded in another room along that hallway for over three hours.

[00:23:53] **Riley:** And in these three hours, These protestors were yelling, violent, awful, [00:24:00] hateful, vengeful, heinous things at both myself and the officers. Um, they were yelling to the officers. You know, they were saying things such as, you're only protecting her because she's a white girl. Or they would say to, to me through the door, they would say, you know, open that door and let her out so we can handle her ourselves.

[00:24:18] **Riley:** She should have known what she was getting into when she came to San Francisco. She knew we would start a riot. She was asking for this. Um, there were ultimately became a point when they were demanding money from me if I wanted to make it home safely. Um, they said to me, you know, if you want safe passage home, you have to pay us or else you don't get to leave.

[00:24:38] **Riley:** Um, to which the Dean of students was there at San Francisco State University, um, and he was actually negotiating with them. Um, he was trying to talk them down, but ultimately they were trying to figure out a price that I could get to leave by. Mm-hmm. It was this kind of, this realization of, wow, this is what [00:25:00] they'll do.

[00:25:00] **Riley:** And really it ultimately, their plan backfired on them because it only boosted my platform. It only, it quadrupled my social media following. It only gave me credibility and it only highlighted how unhinged they can be. And it was after this scenario when the university, the vice president of student Affairs, her name is Dr.

[00:25:21] **Riley:** Jamila Moore. She released an email to their student body, sent it out. And in this email it said, we are so proud of our brave students for handling someone who spread so much violence with, with such peace. They were talking about me spreading violence and talking about their students being the peaceful ones.

[00:25:40] **Riley:** And when I saw that, that's when I lost. I truly lost a little bit of hope in that, in that moment. Um, just how skewed, just how, um, again, willing these people are to lie, to say that was peaceful and to say that I'm the one [00:26:00] spreading violence simply by sharing my experience. Um, that's the direction that we are headed in and we're actively putting one foot in front of the other and going in that direction at the fate of our own hands.

[00:26:11] **Riley:** I mean, it's an exponential decline and, and we're doing it to ourselves.

[00:26:17] **Justin:** Are you concerned about your safety?

[00:26:20] **Riley:** I, in, in those moments? I definitely feared for my life. I, I wholeheartedly did. Mm-hmm. Um, up until then, again, maybe I was naive, but I, I never thought it would escalate to these things. But I am pro I, I keep getting proven wrong.

[00:26:36] **Riley:** Um, day after day, I feel as if this is getting worse and worse. I feel like the tides are beginning to turn. But ultimately it has to get worse before it gets better. And I feel as if we're in this stage of it getting worse. Um, more and more girls, as I mentioned, I get messages every day. I see stories of girls being beat or, or having to compete on a team with [00:27:00] a male.

[00:27:01] **Riley:** Um, I hear from parents who tell me, you know, my daughter, she doesn't wanna play sports at all anymore. Um, she's just quit her, her basketball team because. She has three boys on her team and she doesn't feel comfortable and it's so discouraging. It really is to see this. But that being said, there have been some good things that have been done and I'm appreciating the little steps that we're taking to get to the bigger picture.

[00:27:25] **Riley:** Um, there have been 22 states thus far that have passed some sort of fairness in Women's Sports Bill, which is huge. Um, just I think three years ago there were zero states, so that's been phenomenal work. Um, At the federal level, they're doing everything they can to uphold Title ix. Um, in regards to, um, sports specific organizations like FEA or World Athletics, they have taken somewhat decent approaches to handling this sport by sport.

[00:27:55] **Riley:** Um, so good things are being done. People are becoming louder, they're becoming more [00:28:00] emboldened, more empowered, um, whether that be through social media, through private conversations, people are talking about this and I think. Something I'm noticing is regardless of political affiliation, people are fed up with this.

[00:28:12] **Riley:** Mm-hmm. Um, I've talked to many people who consider themselves lifelong liberals who are frustrated because they're understanding that they align with a party who can't even define what a woman is. Yeah. I mean, we have a sitting Supreme Court justice who, who, who won't say what a woman is. Um, we have people within the Biden administration that we've seen just in the past couple weeks when asked what is a woman?

[00:28:34] **Riley:** They can't provide an answer. Mm-hmm. It, it's mind boggling. And these women who again, are liberals are seeing this and they're kind of puzzled, you know, this was a party that prided themselves on defending women, and now we can't even define one. How can we defend what we can't define? Hmm. Um, and so I, I think that's really powerful.

[00:28:54] **Riley:** There are very few issues that we're able to agree on, uh, amongst the general public. [00:29:00] Um, across party lines, but this is one of them. Even though it's not being shown in the way that representatives are voting, the general public knows this is wrong.

[00:29:10] **Justin:** Riley, I gotta ask you how, cuz you face challenges in life.

[00:29:14] **Justin:** We can either, they can make us bitter or they can make us better. Uh, I think I have a feeling what this has done for you, but totally your life is supposed to be in a completely different place right now. Um, how has this changed you?

[00:29:31] **Riley:** I've had to mature a lot. I've had to develop this sense of almost a theological philosophical wisdom.

[00:29:41] **Riley:** Um, I've always considered myself someone who is, I've always excelled in school. Um, I was supposed to be in dental school this past year and I scored in the top percentile on the dental admissions test. And so, I'm the s e c Scholar Athlete of the year, so I've always done really well in school and, and been someone who is smart and, and all of [00:30:00] those things.

[00:30:00] **Riley:** But I've had to develop a new sense of wisdom this past year to really understand the why. Why is this happening? Not just that it is and how we can combat it, but we need to get to the root of the problem. That's how, I mean, we have to, if we want to ultimately curb this as a whole, why,

[00:30:17] **Justin:** why do you think it's happening?

[00:30:20] **Riley:** I think a couple things. Um, one, I'm a Christian. I think this whole battle is really spiritual warfare. I do, I think that it's really moral versus evil, and the Bible tells us this is going to happen and it tells us we're going to be on the winning side of this, but how long do we have to endure this?

[00:30:38] **Riley:** And so I definitely see a sense of. How God works. But I also see how this past year, so evidently how Satan works, um, I also think that this whole gender ideology movement is a way for people to become victims. Um, typically, and again, this is all just self-reflection and, [00:31:00] and kind of what I think. Um, but I've been noticing some trends in regards to.

[00:31:07] **Riley:** This movement. And what I'm seeing a lot of is white men transition. Um, we know that the white man has never been this group that is victimized or marginalized or oppressed or whatever other term they love to use, and it's a way for them to become that. And by becoming a victim, there's typically less responsibility, there's less accountability, and for some reason people strive for that.

[00:31:31] **Riley:** Um, they want the attention, they want to feel as if they're owed something. It's the sheer sense of entitlement. Mm-hmm. It's narcissism. And again, that's what in my direct experience with Leah Thomas, Leah didn't care how we felt. Leah didn't care that he never would have won those accolades on the men's side.

[00:31:49] **Riley:** Leah didn't care that we were uncomfortable in the locker room. Leah's now saying that, you know, People like myself are, are pushing these views and the guise of being a feminist. But in reality [00:32:00] they're just pushing, pushing transphobic beliefs. Um, it shows entitlement, it shows narcissism, and it shows an utter disregard for anyone other than yourself.

[00:32:09] **Riley:** Mm-hmm. And that's what I think this is, is people want to become victims, which is a very odd approach to take, who would want to be a victim, but I think there are people out there who really do,

[00:32:20] **Justin:** oh, these days. Victimhood comes with all sorts of special treatment and, and things that, uh, yeah, that, uh, that would incentivize that I, it, it's interesting.

[00:32:31] **Justin:** I'm, I'm gonna tell you that many people that I've talked to in the last few years, particularly who have stood up in the face of insanity adversity, uh, people like Dr. Peter McCullough, et cetera, I started to notice a thread of faith. In every one of these people. And I had to ask, uh, when I talked to him and I had to, uh, had a feeling with you too.

[00:32:55] **Justin:** I don't know why, but I just did. Uh, and it's so very encouraging to hear you [00:33:00] say that. Why is it that people are fa of faith are the ones standing up. Um, I know we're short on time, but I I, what what do you think that is?

[00:33:11] **Riley:** I think it's because we, we know that this is bigger than just ourselves. We're able to take ourself out of the equation and from my own experience, again, I get called brave all the time.

[00:33:22] **Riley:** I get called courageous all the time, but I don't feel brave. When I think of who's brave. I think of our military, I think of our law enforcement. I think of people who are actively putting themselves on the front lines. Um, I don't consider taking a stance in the truth. Brave. I I do understand It requires a sense of it now.

[00:33:42] **Riley:** Yeah. But it kind of hit me within these past few weeks that we're just scared of different things. Um, what the people calling me brave are scared of is being labeled transphobic or being labeled, just like you said, any other ism, um, or this cancel culture [00:34:00] that we live in. But that doesn't scare me. What scares me more than that is not standing up for the truth.

[00:34:08] **Riley:** The biblical truth, man and woman, that's what this is. I mean, they're asking us to deny not just truth, but biblical truth, which, which is even more powerful. Um, and I'm not willing to do that. I think for a while. Of course you do. I, I, I was kind of cowering in fear and I was, um, Waiting for someone else to say something, but it hit me.

[00:34:32] **Riley:** We can't, we can't wait for someone else to take a stance in the truth because that's how we've gotten here. And I think my faith, it's kept me grounded. It's kept me, um, it's given me the confidence and the leadership and the security to take the arrows that I'm taking. Um, and it's, I constantly pray. I constantly am, you know, kind of asking God, you know, put me where I need to be.

[00:34:53] **Riley:** And I've realized the quickest way to make him laugh in your face is to make plans for yourself. I thought I would be in dental [00:35:00] school, um, this time last year even, and I, God had other plans. And so I think that's what this is. We're not willing to falter. Of course there are many Christians who, who do and who are.

[00:35:16] **Riley:** Um, but that's why we're here on this planet is to spread his message. And before anything, I wanna live a Christ-like life. Um, God even says in, in the Bible, it's not the healthy who need the doctor, it's the sick. And that's, that's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to spread his message and be someone who can talk respectfully, can talk compassionately without faltering, um, from the truth and from what we know is right and what we know is fair.

[00:35:44] **Justin:** What is your, uh, your last but not least here, what are your, your advice for people that, uh, cause we need more people to stand up. What is your advice for people to find that courage? To be bold and to speak truth,

[00:35:58] **Riley:** in my experience, especially [00:36:00] talking about this issue, this issue, which is so common sense.

[00:36:04] **Riley:** Um, of course you are going to endure some backlash. Hmm. But I'll tell you the backlash I've received. It's nothing dissuading from my argument because you can't dissuade from my argument. Um, my argument has of course my own personal experience, but it also has the truth, science, common sense, logic, reasoning.

[00:36:25] **Riley:** You can't dissuade from what I'm actually saying. So what they'll do is they'll resort to personal attacks, and that's what we saw at San Francisco State. Um, But they'll, they'll say things such as, you know, you're ugly or You should have just trained harder. Or they'll say, my hair is extensions, which this is my real hair.

[00:36:43] **Riley:** It's not extensions. But it kind of took me a minute to realize these are all personal attacks. And I think it, I, I really understood that these people who are saying these things, It speaks more about them than it does about me. Mm-hmm. It's really only highlighting their own [00:37:00] insecurities, because I'm not insecure about how I look.

[00:37:03] **Riley:** Not saying that I'm whatever, but it's just I'm secure enough with myself to not let that bother me. Um, so I, I think that's important to realize because if you approach this conversation with civility and you approach it with sense, which is. Is almost impossible not to do with this conversation. If you approach it with sense, no one can dissuade from what you're actually saying, um, stand true and your convictions and speak your heart.

[00:37:32] **Riley:** I think my message to parents would be to esp. I mean, parents of both daughters and sons. Parents need to be willing to defend their daughters and they need to teach their sons masculinity. Um, I feel like we've reached a point where we've almost deemed masculinity as a bad thing. It's something that's toxic, it's something that, you know, is not looked well upon.

[00:37:55] **Riley:** Um, but that's not true. We need men to defend and [00:38:00] we need men to protect and provide and, and not to get into the stereotypical gender roles here, but men are more willing to do so, and that's what we need. We need parents to defend their daughters and teach their sons masculinity.

[00:38:14] **Justin:** Well, Riley, thank you for standing up.

[00:38:15] **Justin:** Thank you for the fight. Let Me ask you one more thing because I know folks are listening to this and they're thinking to themselves.

[00:38:22] **Justin:** What can we do for you? How can we support you? Certainly wanna pray for you. Um, but what can we do to support you in this fight right now? Uh, is there anything?

[00:38:34] **Riley:** Of course, prayers are always welcome. Um, but I think it's really important to, and I do hate saying this because it makes me sound like an activist, but I think it's important to stay informed on what's happening.

[00:38:45] **Riley:** Um, I always try and post stuff on my Twitter. My Twitter is Riley underscore Gaines underscore. Um, post breaking stories of this happening to other female athletes, of course, unfortunately, um, highlight how legislators, whether [00:39:00] that be representatives, delegates, um, senators, how they're responding, what highlighting if they're doing a good job or a bad job, um, where each state kind of stands in the process, what the Biden administration is doing.

[00:39:11] **Riley:** I always try to highlight these things because. Otherwise, it's things that would kind of get overlooked, um, that the general public wouldn't know about. So I think staying informed is crucial to not believe the, the narrative that the left loves to push, that it's a non-issue. It's not really happening.

[00:39:28] **Riley:** So why should we protect it? That could not be further from the truth. Um, it's happening again at a rampant rate across the country. Regardless of sport division, age, um, where you live, it, it's happening at a rampant rate. It really is. I could list, I really could list a hundred examples off the top of my head of men taking opportunities away from women.

[00:39:50] **Riley:** Um, so I think staying informed is really important. I think it kind of inspires someone when they see this continually happening and nothing being done to change it. Um, I [00:40:00] think it's inspiring. So just saying informed on the topic is the best way to support and when you see these things, Um, repost them, re whatever that might look like.

[00:40:09] **Riley:** Comment on them. Talk to your state legislators, know where your state stands, um, if you have children, where their school stands, uh, whether at the school, I mean, the county level. All of these things are really important.

[00:40:23] **Justin:** Riley Gaines, thank you for, uh, having the courage to stand up in the fight. We'll be praying for you.

[00:40:29] **Justin:** God bless. Of course, of

[00:40:30] **Riley:** course.

[00:40:31] **Justin:** Thank you.

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