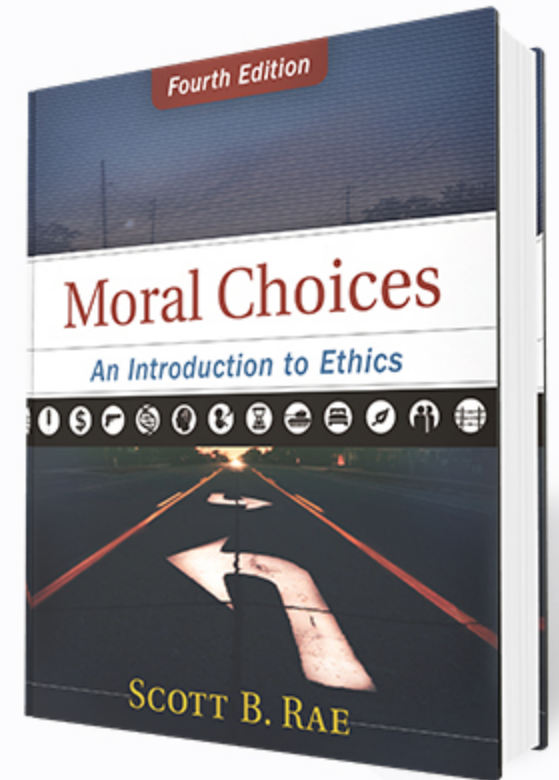


Chapter 6: Ethics at the Beginning of Life, Part 2



Guidelines for Discussion

- This can be a very difficult subject for people who have experienced infertility.
 - Remember, its virtually assured someone who has faced these choices is present and listening to what you are saying.
- Be inquisitive about what others are struggling with, understanding the key questions, and lines of thinking.
- Many of these issues are generated by our use of technology
 - 1st, be careful to critique something if you do not really understand how it works.
 - Is technology a tool, to be used for good or bad? Or does technology shape us in ways we often do not realize? How does that inform if/how we should use it?
 - What unique questions does this a technological capability create?
 - What is the hope or the goal of using this technology?

Introduction

- Since the 1970s, there have been remarkable advances in reproductive technology.
- However, many of these technologies raise ethical questions.
- The primary options offered by fertility clinics are:
 - intrauterine insemination, donor insemination.
 - egg donation.
 - in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood, and intracytoplasmic sperm donation.

Morality of Reproductive Technologies

- There are a wide variety of views regarding the morality of reproductive technology.
- Two fundamental questions raised by reproductive technology are:
 - Should any artificial means of conceiving a child be used?
 - If so, is it acceptable to use third party genetic donors?
- A third, about the use of the technology in general is more theological and pastoral

- The Bible does not address the issue of reproductive technology directly.
 - Though there are a number of dilemmas created by Hagar, Onan (kinsmen redeemer), Jacob's sons through Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah.
 - Does this matter or not?
- Biblical Principles as Rae's "Fence Posts"
 - First, medical technology is part of God's good gift to humans (Gen. 1:26; Prov. 8:22-26)
 - Second, procreation is to take place within a stable, heterosexual, monogamous marriage.
 - Third, whatever reproductive technologies used in order to become pregnant must not destroy embryos created in the process.
 - *Conception* is where Rae roots the principle for all reproductive technologies.

- Rae's Biblical "Fence Posts"

- Forth, Adoption as a legitimate alternative with strong roots in scripture
- Fifth, Trust in God's sovereignty and need to pursue contentment regardless of situation.
- Sixth, Children are a *gift*.

• Intrauterine insemination (IUI)

- In the case of IUI, the husband's genetic material is inseminated into the wife's uterus.
- IUI becomes morally questionable when the woman is given ovulation drugs to facilitate the dropping of 8-10 eggs which pose the possibility of multiple conceptions.
- The couple will be forced to choose which ones to terminate.

- In vitro fertilization (IVF)
 - The term in vitro literally means “in glass” which indicates where fertilization takes place.
 - With the help of ovulation drugs, a woman produces between 8-10 eggs. In the lab the eggs are all fertilized and a select number are placed into the womb.
 - This sets up the same dilemma as in the case of IUI.

If personhood begins at conception, then destroying the embryos is tantamount to abortion.

- The general principles that should guide a couple's use of IVF are that all embryos created in the lab should have a reasonable chance at maturing.
 - All the embryos should be implanted in the mother utilizing the treatment or an adoptive mother.
 - No embryos should be discarded or subject to experimentation.
 - Likewise, no embryos should be left in storage in perpetuity.

- Couples should only fertilize the eggs they are planning on implanting and no more.
- The number of embryos implanted should not exceed the number of children a couple wants.
- Under no circumstances should a couple authorize implantation that might make selective termination an option.

- Surrogacy

- Surrogate motherhood is the most controversial of the new reproductive technologies.
- For a number of reasons, surrogacy has been the subject of debate.
 - Surrogacy invites a third party into the process of procreation.
 - Is surrogacy equivalent to baby selling? In cases where the surrogate supplies both the egg and the womb, she is the legal mother.
 - Potentially exploitive for both the surrogate and the infertile couple.
 - The definition of motherhood.

Leon Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science*

Consider the views of life and the world reflected in the following different expressions to describe the process of generating new life. Ancient Israel, impressed with the phenomenon of transmission of life from father to son, used a word we translate as “begetting” or “siring.” The Greeks, impressed with the springing forth of new life in the cyclical processes of generation and decay, called it genesis, from a root meaning “to come into being.” ... The premodern Christian English-speaking world, impressed with the world as given by a Creator, used the term “pro-creation.” We, impressed with the machine and the gross national product (our own work of creation), employ a metaphor of the factory, “re-production.”

as cited in Gilbert Meilander, *BioEthics*, 2nd Ed.

Roman Catholic Church

- God designed natural continuum between sex in marriage, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and parenthood.
 - *Assisting* the process is okay but *replacing* the process is not. John Paul II, every couple should be “open to life.”
 - Its a rejection of protestant stress on “exercising dominion” (Gen. 1:26)

“The procreation of a new person, whereby the man and the woman collaborate with the power of the Creator, must be the fruit and the sign of the mutual self-giving of *the spouses*, of their love and fidelity..., in marriage and in its indissoluble unity [is] the only setting worthy of truly responsible procreation.”

“But from a moral point of view procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses’ union... The procreation of a human person [is to be] brought about as the fruit of the conjugal act specific to the love between persons.”

- Catholics have criticized Protestants view of contraception as opening the door in our society to abortion, divorce, and same-sex marriage because we weakened (theologically) the strong connection between marriage and procreation.

CPT 2019 Techne Conference

- Christina Lake, PhD Emory, Professor of English at Wheaton College, IL
 - Author of *Prophets of the Posthuman: American Fiction, Biotechnology, and the Ethics of Personhood* (Survey of how modern literature has explored the problems of technology).
- Biblical Principles have been used to heal but have frowned upon enhancement.
- Difficult to draw a line between therapy and enhancement.
 - Is it therapy to use a growth hormones for a dwarf but not a short man? (Messi)
 - We use enhancements in orthodontics. Point is, “therapeutic” has limitations.
- **Better: Does the action the individual want to take support or encourage the view of our lives, and especially the lives of others, as a *gift* to be received with gratitude or as a *possession* to be owned and controlled?**
- FWIW: Lake does not believe things like IVF encourage us to see life as a gift.

Christina Lake: What is the motive?

- Other Technologies: CRISPR, artificial wombs, and more...
 - How long before the manufacturing of human beings is a realistic possibility? Before we have “Gattaca” parents or we design humans for servitude when the promises of AI fail?
 - Technology will invent problems that do not exist. (its called marketing).
- Why not use the “tool” for something good? Because the more we do the more difficult it is to:
 - **...to be grateful.** The good life becomes out of reach due to impossible future promise.
 - People process out of their loves and that it would better if... they had a girl, their kids were taller, smarter, stronger, etc. Therefore, they will see little reason *not to* alter their offspring.
 - There is nothing pathological about being short, being male or female, we all have to learn to be content with what we are given.
 - **... to endure and learn through suffering.** Use of technology causes people to have their “Job muscles” atrophy rather than coming to terms with suffering and learning from it.
 - **... to receive grace.** Borgmann “inverse relationship between being in control and receiving grace.”

Case Studies

- Case 6:1 (p. 197): Counseling the Infertile Couple
- Case 6:2 (p. 198): Sperm Donor Meets His Child
- Case 6:3 (p. 198): Same-Sex Couples and IVF
- Case 6:4 (p. 199): Surrogacy and Leftover Embryos