

I. Reproductive Technologies

- Up to 18% of couples are affected by infertility
- The number of affected couples rose 300% between 1964-1984
- Possible reasons:
 - * low sperm count and blocked sperm ducts – possibly from insecticides
 - * blocked fallopian tubes or scar tissue in the ovaries or uterus - often caused by VD (Approx. 300,000 women per year lose fertility from VD)
 - * many couples wait longer – it becomes more difficult to conceive

- 3 reasons artificial reproductive technologies may be growing:

- * declining levels of fertility
- * increasing # of abortions
- * the coercive nature of technologies

Statement of Purpose

The goal is to examine the different methods and examine them ethically. Some of what we discuss may be convicting for some who have gone down certain paths in the past or are currently doing so. My hope is not for this to bring shame or guilt but rather to help us make biblically ethical choices in the future. Let's consider this topic with an open heart and mind and with the hope and grace found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Terms

ART – Artificial Reproductive Technology

- Any method used to induce pregnancy by artificial or partially artificial means. It involves the manipulation of sperm and eggs.

A) Hormonal Therapy

- The use of hormones in medical treatment
- Used to replace or enhance the hormonal stimulation necessary for a couple to successfully conceive.
- It induces ovulation or sperm development

B) AI – Artificial Insemination

- sperm are inserted directly into a woman's cervix, fallopian tubes, or uterus

Types of AI

1. IUI – Intrauterine Insemination

- the sperm are washed and processed and concentrated prior to placement in the uterus

Is this ethically ok? I would say that it depends. We have to look further. The question that we need to ask is: whose sperm is it that is being used? That leads to the next item.

2. AIH – Artificial Insemination Husband

- the sperm of the husband are inserted into his wife's cervix, fallopian tubes or uterus

Let's examine it from our Biblical Ethics Model.

Conduct – Character – Goals

> *What about conduct?* Could it depend upon how the sperm is collected? What if pornography was used?

> *What about character?* Is there any motive that should be considered?

> *What about goals (glorify God)?* Is there anything in the process or in my character that would not glorify God?

Potential Problems:

A. Method at sperm collection

B. Lose the unitive part of sex - (In orthodox Christianity, sex in marriage has two ends – procreation and unity. Some believe this process takes the relationship aspect out of sex.) I am not sure it can be completely condemned because of that.

C. Does the opportunity always justify it? What if the Lord had something else in mind? These are simply questions to ask and pray through, letting the Holy Spirit help the decision.

3. AID – Artificial Insemination Donor

- The sperm comes from a donor instead of the husband.

- What is a current situation where this is happening frequently?

Lesbians are doing this frequently.

Let's apply our Biblical Ethical Model.

> *What about conduct?*

- method of sperm collection?

- often it is single moms wanting another child

- danger of accidental incest because of an anonymous donor

- is it adultery? Some say "it's not intercourse." However, the act of procreation, intended to be between husband and wife, takes place with someone who is not your spouse. Do we want to go there? Err on the conservative side.

> *What about character?*

- What is my motive? If I believe God sovereignly brought my spouse and me together do I trust Him with this issue?

> *What about goals?*

- While God may use technology to help a married couple conceive, would God condone a third party donating sperm? Am I confident that God would be glorified in that?

Other problems:

- "He's/She's not my kid." He could feel jealousy or disconnect.

- legal issues – fighting over parental rights. Husband says, "I'm not really the father." If the donor is not anonymous, he may fight for custody.

- selective breeding

4. IVF – In Vitro Fertilization

- In Vitro means *glass*

- The process of removing a woman's ovum or eggs, combining them with sperm in a petri dish or test tube, and after a few days, inserting the fertilized eggs into the womb that will carry the child.

- Drugs are usually given to the woman to increase the number of eggs produced in the month when they intend to harvest the eggs

GIFT – Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer -- injects ova and sperm into the fallopian tubes hoping they will unite.

ZIFT – Zygote Intrafallopian Transfer – an embryo is produced in a petri dish and then placed in the fallopian tube.

Let's apply our Biblical Ethical Model:

> *What about conduct?*

- Whose sperm is used? Is there a donor? Is this adultery?

- What was the method for collecting the sperm?

- The process commonly produces multiple embryos (preferably 3).

- Once done, either several are placed in a woman's uterus so there is a better chance of pregnancy or some of the embryos are frozen.
- In the 1st case, not all of the embryos survive. Those that do are often aborted or destroyed through a process called fetal reduction.
- In the 2nd case, the couple must decide what to do with the remaining frozen embryos. Often they are destroyed. Other times they are used for research.
- Can we justify the experimentation with and the destruction of these embryos? Are they humans?
- An embryo is a fertilized egg that represents the beginning of life.
- Destruction or neglect of human life is normal.

Psalm 139:13-16

> What about character?

- If it is the husband's sperm, was their lust involved?
- What are my motives?

> What about goals?

- Is God glorified in the process, both in sperm collection and in what happens to these embryos?

Further Questions to Consider:

- > Is embryo adoption immoral?
- > Consider Russell Moore's answer:

(see following handout)

Surrogacy

- (See Joe Carter's Article)

Other Problems to Consider:

- Who is the family now?
 - Exploitation of women, particularly poor women. "Stars and Stripes" and other military media advertise to military wives who are often low-income and needy.
 - Psychological studies have shown the effects on children to be disturbing. Children often feel abandoned and betrayed by their biological parents. They end up feeling confused and lost.
 - The surrogate grows a strong maternal bond with the child, causing her to want to keep it.
 - Legal issues: (*Consider this case*)
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The thorny legal issues surrounding surrogacy first appeared with the "Baby M" case in New Jersey in 1987. A married couple, William and Elizabeth Stern, contracted with Mrs. Whitehead, a married mother of two, to carry and give birth to their child for \$10,000. Whitehead was inseminated with Stern's sperm, and Baby M was born on March 27, 1986.

However, the Whiteheads grew uncomfortable with the idea of selling the child and wouldn't release her to the Sterns. In the court case that followed, Judge Harvey Sorkow declared that the contract terminating Mrs. Whitehead's parental rights was enforceable; the New Jersey Supreme Court reversed his decision in a 7-0 ruling on February 3, 1988.

Harold Cassidy, the Whiteheads' lawyer, explained in Public Discourse in 2012 that "16 separate policies and statutory provisions were violated in Baby M. Today, gestational surrogacy arrangements violate those same policies and statutes."

Conduct, character, and goals – the issues are similar to IVF since the same process is used. Also, consider Joe Carter's article in the separate handout.