



Pro-Life Bulletin Board

A project of American Life League, Inc.

P.O. Box 1350, Stafford, VA 22555 • phone: 540-659-4171 • web: www.ALL.org

In vitro fertilization violates human dignity

Science and technology have made enormous contributions to our lives and society. But the fact that a certain procedure is technologically possible does not make it ethically right. “In vitro” literally means “in glass.” In vitro fertilization is a process whereby human life is generated in a laboratory environment such as a glass petri dish.

The process of IVF begins when fertility technicians administer hormone treatments to a woman. The hormones hyper-stimulate the woman’s ovaries to produce a number of eggs at one time. The eggs are collected from the woman’s body and fertilized. The resulting embryos are nourished in laboratory cultures and inserted into the woman’s body with the hope that one embryo will successfully implant in the lining of the womb and develop. The process is very controlled and involves numerous trips to the IVF clinic.

Human embryos die in the IVF process

The Jones Institute, one of the pioneers of IVF, reports that only 10 to 20% of the human embryos produced by IVF ever result in a normal pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control estimated that in 2003, 48,000 babies were born through IVF in the United States. This means that 240,000 – 480,000 human embryos are missing from the equation for that year alone.

- Many embryos die in the transfer process since they are fragile.
- Some embryos are unwanted and eliminated because they are considered genetically inadequate.
- Some embryos are stored alive in freezers.
- Some embryos are simply killed as they are washed down the sink.

It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception/fertilization. From conception, a human embryo has a complete genetic code, and his or her growth and development are totally coordinated from within. When this fundamental moral line is violated or obscured, categories of people become devalued and they become easily used for utilitarian purposes.

What about infertile couples?

No one has the right to a child—even the most loving of couples. IVF turns children into commodities. When a couple undergoes IVF, they are saying, “We want a child no matter what,” and the child becomes an object. This evolves into a selective mentality, whereby couples choose the kind of child they want. Above all, a child is a gift. Cooperating with God’s plan for human procreation ensures that all children are accepted as gifts. IVF is wrong because it separates human procreation from marital union.

Spousal union is expressed both spiritually and physically. And at the same time, the procreative dimension yields both spiritual benefits and physical fruits. When marriage is physically fruitful, a couple participates in God’s creative act instead of dominating it.

Is there a connection to cloning?

Once IVF is accepted, there is no substantial reason to oppose cloning. Both take human procreation out of the context of conjugal union. IVF begins the slippery slope that leads to cloning, eugenics and experimentation on human embryos.

One can easily understand that contraception is a violation of this same principle. Contraception is a separation of the procreative meaning from the unitive meaning of marriage. In other words, it’s like saying “yes” to spousal love but “no” to the possibility of a child.

Pregnant and in need of help?

Heartbeat International: 800-395-4357