

## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



# Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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## INFERTILITY, REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY, AND ADOPTION

Infertility is the inability of a couple to conceive and bear children due to a lack of normal function in either the man's or the woman's reproductive system. Modern medical developments provide several solutions for infertility, and it is appropriate to consider these in this section related to marriage period at the end.

**Infertility in the old and New Testaments.** Infertility has been a source of deep sorrow for both men and women, but especially for women, for all of human history, as we see from some of the early chapters of the Bible. **Sarah** (Sarai) was unable to bear children to Abraham (**Gen. 11:30; 16:1**) for most of her life, until she miraculously bore Isaac in her old age (see **Gen. 21:1-7**). Jacob's wife **Rachel** was unable to bear children for a long time after that her marriage to Jacob (**Gen. 29:31**), as was **Samson's mother**, the wife of Manoah (**Judg. 13:2**). **Hannah**, the mother of Samuel, cried out to the Lord in deep sorrow because of her infertility (**1 Sam. 1:2-18**). In the New Testament, Zechariah and **Elizabeth** "had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years" (**Luke 1:7**), but, again through God's miraculous intervention, Elizabeth eventually gave birth to John the Baptist (**vv. 57-66**). These narrative examples show that *overcoming infertility is something that pleases God*, and is often a manifestation of his special blessing on a couple.

In addition, there are some general passages that show God's great blessing when he gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. "Praise the LORD!" (**Ps. 113:9; see also Ex 23:26; Deut. 7:14; Isa. 54:1; Gal 4:27**).

Infertility should not be something about which we are indifferent, such as the color of our hair or eyes, but rather something we see as a condition that is another result of the fall, one of the diseases and disabilities that entered the human race

after Adam and Eve sinned. Infertility was not part of God's good creation as he originally made it or intended it to function.

**A Feeling of Grief in Childlessness.** God in his wisdom shows compassion and awareness of the deep grief of childlessness in several passages, such as the stories of Rachel (**Gen. 30:1**) and Hannah (**1 Sam. 1:5-10**).

The deep grief that is felt by childless couples must not be minimized or dismissed lightly by others, especially pastors and counselors, but also friends. Because only women are able to bear and nurse children, this grief can be especially acute for wives due to a sense of loss at not being able to have a jointly conceived child, and not having the experience of pregnancy, at not going through the birth and breastfeeding of the child, and at not being able to serve as a mother for her own children.

**Faith in the Midst of Sorrow.** Sometimes a childless couple will wonder if their situation is a result of God's displeasure or discipline, and this will make it difficult for them to believe that God has good purposes for them and for their lives. But the example of Zechariah and Elizabeth in the beginning of Luke's Gospel shows that infertility can happen even to a godly, morally exemplary couple, because Zechariah and Elizabeth “were both righteous before God” (**Luke 1:6**; this is a reminder that their infertility was not a result of their individual sin), yet they were still unable to have children (**Luke 1:5-7**).

### **Biblical World View Principles**

1. Modern Medicine in General Is Morally Good.
2. We Should Treat the Unborn Child as a Human Person from the Moment of Conception.
3. God Intends That a Child Should Be Conceived by and Born to a Man and Woman who are Married to Each Other.

### **SOME MODERN REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES ARE MORALLY ACCEPTABLE**

1. **Artificial Insemination by Husband (AIH).** The process of artificial insemination by husband does not violate any of the biblical principles named above. It simply enables a wife to become pregnant by her husband's sperm when, for some reason, it is physically unlikely or impossible for this to happen through ordinary sexual intercourse. The husband's sperm is first

collected and then injected into the wife's cervix or uterus using a needleless syringe or other medical device. The child is conceived by and born to a man and a woman who are married to each other. No unborn human person or embryo is destroyed in the process. And the wonderful result is that infertility is overcome for this couple.

2. **In Vitro Fertilization without Destruction of Embryos.** In vitro fertilization (abbreviated IVF) is the process of joining together a woman's egg (ovum) and a husband sperm in a laboratory rather than inside a woman's body.
3. **Embryo Adoption.** Often during the process of in vitro fertilization, more of a woman's eggs are fertilized in the laboratory than are implanted in her womb. As noted above, instead of destroying these embryos, some couples decide to freeze them, in case they decide to have more children later or for other reasons. As of 2015, it is estimated that there are more than 1,000,000 frozen embryos in storage in the United States alone. Many of them will never be claimed or used by the original parents. What should be done with these embryos? One possibility is that other couples might adopt the embryos, have them implanted in the wife's womb, and allowed them to grow and be born as normal children. Sometimes these children are called snowflake children.
4. **Prefertilization Genetic Screening for Genetic Diseases.** It is now possible to genetically screen a husband prior to fertilization of a woman's egg in in vitro fertilization or prior to artificial insemination by the husband. Such screening can determine if certain genetically determined diseases will be passed on from the father to the children. Since the male sperm by itself is not yet a human person, I see no moral objection to this procedure in itself, if used to prevent the conception of a child who would likely have a serious genetically transmitted disease (such screening can now test for cystic fibrosis, heart malformation, hemophilia, Huntington's disease, and sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia).

However, the same procedure could also be used not just to prevent diseases, but to allow the parents to choose among various types of perfectly healthy children. For example, prior to fertilization, a couple might decide that they want to have a baby boy, and therefore only use sperm that contained a Y chromosome. Or they might decide that they want to have a baby girl, and therefore decide to use sperm that contain no Y chromosome. Future types of selection might include the possibility of choosing the minimum height to

which a child will grow, color of eyes or hair, or even IQ level. **Would this be right?**

While such genetic screening processes do not involve new human life being put to death (because fertilization has not occurred), I would seriously question the motives of couples who would seek to make such selections.

## **OTHER MODERN REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES ARE MORALLY UNACCEPTABLE**

1. In Vitro Fertilization with Selective Reduction.
2. Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID).
3. Surrogate Motherhood
4. Cloning.

## **ADOPTION**

Adoption is often a wonderful option for childless couples, if it is their desire to be parents and something they believe God is calling them to do. Adoption is also a wonderful reflection of God's own actions and adopting us to be his children (see John 1:12; Rom. 8:14 – 17; Gal. 4:5; Eph 1:5). And adoption is a very practical way to care for “orphans” which is something that James says is part of “religion that is pure and undefiled before God the father” (James 1:27). For these reasons, not only many childless couples but also many Christian couples who already have some naturally born children have decided that God is calling them to adopt one or more additional children.

Because scripture views adoption in such a positive way, and because the adoption process is often difficult and expensive, some churches have established or work closely with programs that will provide financial, legal, and other support to couples as they go through the adoption process.