

What Does God Say About IT?

A Biblical Response To Infertility Options

There are times in our walk with God that we begin to ask the question, “What does God say about it?” There are instances when there appears to be no clear answer from the Word of God on the situation that you may be facing or the question at hand seems to provoke more questions than answers.

Then people always seem to have opinions that confuse the situation more. However, when one begins to examine the Word of God the answer to the question is clearer than originally thought. The Word of God contains all of the answers to life’s questions. It is the believer’s source for life’s direction.

It is the job of the believer to hunt and dig to find the answer to what they may be seeking. II Timothy 2:15 says, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, but rightly dividing the word of truth.” As a result, the answers to our questions may require that we exert energy in studying.

I recently had an interesting conversation with a group of coworkers on the subject of options for single women who desire to have children but it may not be in God’s will for them to be married. This conversation led to a discussion on the topic of fertility options. Hence we come to the first question that we need to hunt and dig to find an answer for: What is the biblical response to fertility options for when the believer does not want to adopt?

Adoption has always been and will continue to be an option for believers seeking to have children when they are childless. However, with the advancement of modern medicine and technological breakthroughs adoption is no longer the only option for childless couples or inspiring single mothers and fathers.

Therefore, what does the Word of God say to a believing couple who is unable to become pregnant by conventional means, but would love to have a child with their own genes? What does the Word of God say to the single, successful, Christian woman, who would love to have a child but has not been found by a husband yet? How is the single, successful, Christian man, who would love to have a child but has not found a wife addressed by the Word?

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS

In order to address these situations from the Word of God we must first understand what assisted reproductive technology is available today. *Artificial Insemination, Surrogacy, In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT) and embryo transfer* are five of the methods used today as alternatives to adoption.

- **Artificial Insemination** – is a common and simple procedure whereby the wife of an infertile man is artificially inseminated by the sperm of a donor. In situations in which the husband has viable sperm but conception hasn't occurred naturally his sperm can be used in this procedure.
- **Surrogacy** – is when someone else carries the unborn child for the term of the pregnancy. This method is generally used when the wife is infertile. A contract is signed by the couple and the surrogate stating that the couple will pay all necessary expenses and will take custody of the baby when the baby is born. The surrogate is artificially inseminated with the sperm of the husband. The husband is the legal and biological father of the child. The surrogate mother must relinquish all rights to the child therefore, allowing the child to be adopted by the wife.

An alternate form of surrogacy is used when the wife is fertile but cannot carry a child to term. The wife's ovum is fertilized with the husband's sperm in-vitro, and then the embryo is implanted in the womb of the surrogate. The child is the genetic product of the husband and wife; however, the legal ramifications are still being sorted out.
- **In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF)** – is the method in which several ova are removed from the wife and fertilized with the husband's sperm. The fertilized ova are then placed in the wife's womb with the intent that a normal pregnancy occur. This is one way a couple who cannot conceive naturally can have children who are genetically like themselves. **IVF** can also occur using the ova and/or sperm of donors, where, of course the child would not be the genetic product of both the husband and wife. A major issue which remains is what does God have to say when more than one egg is successfully fertilized but only one is implanted.
- **Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT)** – is also a method where the ova from the wife are fertilized with the husband's sperm. However, unlike **IVF**, **GIFT** does not call for eggs to be removed and fertilized externally. During laparoscopy, the eggs are removed from the ovaries and immediately replaced into the fallopian tubes along with prepared sperm. After fertilization, the egg then descends into the uterus for normal fetal development. In this case, the fetus is genetically the child of both spouses.
- **Embryo Transfer** – is a method by which a donor woman is impregnated through artificial insemination with the husband's sperm. The embryo is washed out of the donor's uterus before it has a chance to implant and is then placed in the infertile wife's uterus so that she may carry it to term. The danger here is that the embryo might implant in the donor's womb. The "solution" to this problem is often abortion.

SINGLE OPTIONS

The first group we would like to address is singles who have not found or been found by a mate yet they have a desire to be a parent. Though the desire to have children is good, we must first line it up to the Word of God and God's heart concerning children.

Genesis 1:28 states, *“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth ...”* From this verse of scripture three clear points can be made.

1. God blessed Adam and Eve together. This blessing could not have taken place until God created Eve and presented her to Adam (Gen. 2:22). God did not bless Adam by himself; neither did he bless Eve by herself. He blessed them together. God united Adam and Eve as husband and wife before he blessed them with children.
2. Adam and Eve did not receive the commandment to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, until they were united as one. God did not give this commandment to Adam when he was first created because it was a task that he would need help with; neither did he give the responsibility to Eve alone after she was created. It was a responsibility he gave to them both together.
3. Marriage was created with two people in mind. A husband and a wife. That is the foundation of the family and it is that the vehicle that God has ordained to bring forth children. Psalm 128:3 states, *“Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table.”* Therefore, the heart of God for the family structure is husband, wife, and then children. Although children have been conceived out of many different relationships or ways, no one can deny that the confines of marriage is God’s heart for the forming of a family.

Therefore, single believers cannot put the cart before the horse and invest themselves in any of these fertility options simply because they are available. As Paul stated in I Corinthians 6:12, *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”* The world may offer us options to meet our desires; however, as followers of Jesus, we must adhere to what the Word of God says about our situation.

As a single Christian man or woman your focus should not be on having a child. However, your focus should be on being the best single Christian possible. With that said the only option for the single Christian who would like to be a parent is adoption.

MARRIAGE

Assisted reproduction technology may be helpful for married couples who find themselves unable to naturally conceive or carry a child to full term. However, one must still consider what the Word of God is saying before choosing one. There are three very important points that must be considered: the sacredness of marriage and how God, its creator, set it up to be; the beginning of life; and God’s will for the couple.

1. The Sacredness of Marriage

God himself has set marriage to be the only relationship in which sexual relations should be

shared. Proverbs 5:15 states, *“Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well”* and Exodus 20:14 reads, *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”*. From these two scriptures one can see the sacredness that God has placed on the bond of marriage.

Even the marriage vows which every couple make on their wedding day states, *“whatever God has joined together let no one tear it apart”*. Therefore, it is the responsibility of both the husband and the wife to make sure that their marriage covenant is not broken. Marriage is the committed covenant between a man and a woman and that covenant should not be shared with a third party in any way.

Thus, based on the sacredness of marriage only two of the fertility reproduction technology options would seem feasible for the believing couple and only with certain restrictions. As long as only the ova from the wife and sperm from the husband are used then artificial insemination and gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT) could be viable.

This would give a couple an opportunity to have a child with genes from both the mother and the father. It would also protect the sacredness of marriage by not allowing in a third party, which surrogacy, embryo transfer, and the usage of another woman’s ova or another man’s sperm would.

2. The Beginning of Life

There are many differing opinions about when does life begin for the unborn child. Some say life begins when the heart beat is detected during the 6th week. Others will argue that life begins when the unborn child begins to look like a human being. Then there are those who will say that life begins for the unborn child when the child has been born. However, for the believer there should be no differing of opinion of when does life begin.

Jeremiah 1:5 says, *“Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you to be a prophet unto the nations.”* While, Isaiah 49:1 states, *“The Lord hath called me from the womb: from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.”* God knew both Jeremiah and Isaiah before they were born. As they were being formed in their mother’s womb God gave them both their personality, talents, temperament and destiny.

David tells us in Psalm 139:13-14, *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* From this it is clear that life begins when God creates it at conception. The definition of conception is when the sperm from the man fertilizes the ova from the woman. As a result life begins at the moment of fertilization.

Therefore, we can conclude that God does not judge life according to the stage of development as humans do. Even the tiniest embryo is the subject of His love and care. God does not see the unborn child as a blob, an embryo, or a fetus. However, he sees the unborn child in the realm of our total existence. God loves us all whether we are yet unborn, a young woman in the prime of her life, or an old man facing retirement.

When IVF is used several ova are removed from the wife and fertilized with the husband's sperm. When more than one egg has been successfully fertilized but only one is implanted in the womb, the question then becomes, what happens to the fertilized egg? The answer, most times is that they are either destroyed or frozen for later use and when they are not used they are eventually destroyed. For that reason in-vitro fertilization (IVF) should not be considered as an option for believing couples.

THE WILL OF GOD

Now, that the options of assisted reproductive technology has been examined according to the Word of God. There is still one question that remains unanswered. What is God's will for you concerning this situation? Proverbs 3:5-6 states, *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* As we pray and trust God, we must believe that He will allow the situation to work out according to his will. Ultimately it is God's will that we want to come to pass even when it is contrary to our own desires and dreams. ✨