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That They May Have Life

The emotional pain of infertility is a trial of the heart and can lead faithful husbands and wives to make questionable ethical choices. One of the commonly chosen alternative options is IVF. With an average of a “42.8% success rate of women under 35”, in vitro fertilization has become increasingly more popular. The word ‘in vitro’ literally means in glass, which is how each embryo is formed in a science lab. This is not the God-given way to be fruitful and multiply, and IVF opens the door for Satan to kill and destroy, it creates a hierarchy of life, and gives false hope to infertile couples. “That They May Have Life” highlights how life is a blessing through God. John 6:63 states “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit^[a] and life”. This is a powerful message that emphasizes that true, eternal, and abundant life comes from the Holy Spirit, and not from physical understandings and desires. Jesus clarifies that His words, when understood spiritually, are life-giving.

John 10:10 states, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (Bible Gateway). Abundant life is a spiritual state of communion with God, and should not rely on obtaining life through any technical means. Life should be viewed as a gift rather than some commodity to be manufactured. While any child is a blessing from God, it is important to remember that babies produced through IVF have several siblings who died to give

one child life. This breaks a very simple ethical rule, where you cannot ask another person to sacrifice their life for someone, but you can choose to sacrifice yourself. Through IVF, doctors and parents are knowingly discarding and wasting viable embryos. The life-affirming approach establishes that every embryo, from the moment of fertilization, is a human person made in the image of God.

IVF often involves a screening of the embryos, which includes checking for genetic “defects” or gender, and discarding the embryos that don’t meet their standard (Mayo Clinic). This creates a hierarchy of life, which presents the idea that some people are perfect, and those people are the only ones allowed to live. The abundant life given to us through Christ includes all people. It is for the weak, disabled, and the ‘imperfect’. Discarding embryos based on simple traits is the ultimate act of killing and destroying human value. Each child given to us through God is a gift and is never a right or a privilege. Psalm 139:13, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Bible Gateway). This emphasizes how God created every person individually and in his own image. For we are fearfully and wonderfully made in God’s image. Amongst all this, it is essential that we understand that every child produced through IVF is a blessing and a gift, but we mourn the loss of their siblings who died in the process.

There is a varied demographic of people who have turned to IVF. Commonly, upper-class women who struggle with infertility, and recently, LGBTQ couples have started turning to IVF to have children of their own. It is important to remember that an abundant life is not measured by the number of biological children one has, but by one’s relationship with God. The thief can try to steal a couple's joy by making them feel like their life will only be complete and full when they can conceive. Couples who struggle with infertility can experience the abundance of life through spiritual fatherhood/motherhood, service, or adoption, even if biological conception is not possible. Each of us has our God-given vocation through Him and His word.

“For in him we live and move and have our being..we are his offspring.” Acts 17:28 lays out perfectly how we each have our individual vocation through His word (Bible Gateway). While we should be thankful for the gift of life given through IVF, we cannot forget the millions of viable embryos that have been callously thrown away simply because they are not completely perfect. We remember to mourn the lives of those children while celebrating the gift of life given through their siblings.

References

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