

A Person's a Person, No Matter How Small:
Why *In Vitro* Fertilization Is Not Morally Justifiable Within a Christian Worldview

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Introduction

On July 26th of 2025, a record-breaking baby was born, earning the extraordinary title of the world's "oldest baby." As reported by MIT Technology, Thaddeus Daniel Pierce was adopted as an embryo, having been conceived through *in vitro* fertilization thirty-one years before his birth. His biological mother had used *in vitro* fertilization in 1994 to create four embryos, one of whom she successfully became pregnant with and gave birth to. The other three embryos were then no longer needed and so put up for adoption to another couple. For the next three decades, they remained indefinitely frozen in an embryo storage facility, until, finally, they found a willing adoptive family in Tim and Lindsey Pierce. The Pierces adopted and implanted the two still-living embryos, one of which – Thaddeus – survived to birth. This summer, it will have been one year since Thaddeus' birthday, but thirty-two years since he was conceived! Reflecting on her family's sensational situation, Lindsay Pierce responded simply, "We didn't go into it thinking we would break any records... We just wanted to have a baby" (Hamzelou, 2025). Such an unprecedented picture of parenthood vividly portrays the capabilities of modern reproductive technology as well as the unforeseen ethical questions they inevitably raise. Should Thaddeus have been frozen as an embryo in the first place? What about the two other embryos, his siblings, who did not survive the IVF process? In a world facing the tension between what can and what should be done, Christians must take the time to consider whether IVF is a morally justifiable fertility treatment option.

Infertility is an age-old lament, and one bearing a legacy of physical, emotional, and psychological pain. According to Rooney and Domar (2022) in *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, approximately 1 in 8 couples struggle with infertility, and 25-60% of infertile individuals experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, and psychiatric symptoms

(Rooney & Domar, 2022). In response to such a significant issue, the last century has seen massive leaps in both the prevalence and advancement of assistive reproductive technologies, or ARTs. Although a variety of infertility treatments exist, *in vitro* fertilization is by far the most common, with the Pacific Fertility Center Los Angeles (2024) reporting that IVF accounted for an impressive 99% of all fertility treatment cycles in 2021 (Pacific Fertility Center Los Angeles, 2024). The history of IVF, as recorded by IVF Worldwide, can be traced back to the testing of embryo transfer on rabbits in the 1890s and eventually led to the birth of Louise Brown in 1978, the first child to be successfully born through IVF (“The history,” n.d.).

From that point on, in both the United States and the world, IVF has only increased in use as well as popularity. A 2024 Pew Research Center survey reported that 70% of US adults believe that “having access to IVF is a good thing.” This support even spans party lines, as 63% of Republicans or Republican-leaning independents and 79% of Democrats or Democrat-leaners promote its access (Borelli, 2024). Further, Trevor Hughes with USA Today (2024) writes that IVF is supported by 73% of pro-life individuals and 83% of evangelical Christians. Moreover, in terms of prevalence, IVF is responsible for the conception of approximately 2% of all children born in the U.S. (Hughes, 2024).

Such incredible ubiquity begs an investigation into IVF itself. What is actually taking place in the treatment process, and what are the results? According to Extend Fertility (2020): IVF is a treatment in which a female patient’s eggs are surgically removed from the ovaries [and] fertilized in a laboratory, with sperm from a male partner or sperm donor, to create embryos. (“In vitro” is Latin for “in glass,” and refers to the process of fertilizing an egg in a laboratory dish.) Then, the resulting embryo(s) are transferred back to the uterus in hopes of achieving pregnancy.

In other words, *in vitro* fertilization is the conception of a human embryo by the combination of egg and sperm in a laboratory setting outside the woman's body, after which the embryo is implanted into the mother's womb to create a pregnancy. As the article proceeds to explain, each cycle includes the injection of reproductively stimulating medications into the mother, the collection of eggs and sperm, continual monitoring by fertility doctors and embryologists, and the eventual surgical implantation of the embryo into the uterus, all of which contribute to IVF's significant cost of \$12,000-\$20,000 per cycle. Despite such a high price, the likelihood of success – meaning that the IVF cycle results in a live birth – is only around 54% for women under 35, and the success rates only decrease as patients age (“IUI vs. IVF”, 2020). In other words, parents who undergo this process are spending thousands of dollars on a coin toss with whether or not they will bring home a living child.

Another important point of understanding in the IVF conversation is the development and treatment of human embryos involved. According to Illume Fertility (2025), upon the moment of an egg's fertilization, it is classified as an embryo. In the context of an IVF conception, the microscopic embryo continues to develop in the petri dish for 5-6 days until it reaches the blastocyst stage, which is the point at which implantation to the womb can occur. The problem, however, is that every IVF cycle harvests and fertilizes a group of multiple eggs from the mother, resulting in the creation of multiple embryos with each cycle. After an embryo's fertilization, the likelihood of survival is shockingly low. As Cynthia Murdock, MD, writes, “On average, only 30-50% of fertilized eggs make it to the blastocyst stage” (Murdock, 2025). This means that at best, only half of these early embryos will survive the first six days. Even after this significant loss, the harsh reality is that many of the living embryos will not actually be implanted in the womb. Fertility doctors typically select one or, in rarer situations, up to three of the healthiest

embryos (based on preimplantation genetic testing) to implant, leaving the parents with the burdensome decision of what to do with the embryos that remain. Amy Demma, Esq., outlines in RESOLVE's 2013 winter newsletter what options the parents have for these embryos: indefinitely freezing the embryos in storage in a cryopreservation facility, donating the embryos to another couple, giving them over to scientific research, intentionally implanting them at the wrong time for a pregnancy to purposefully result in a miscarriage, or simply letting them be destroyed (Demma, 2013). This undeniable and immense cost of human embryos raises intense ethical questions on the morality of IVF.

In light of the biological and biblical truth concerning the unborn and the reality of IVF's treatment of human embryos, the fundamental argument of this paper is that *in vitro* fertilization is not morally justifiable within a Christian worldview. This thesis will approach the subject of IVF from a biblical perspective, understanding and analyzing the topic through the lens of the Bible and its moral framework. Additionally, while there are a host of fertility treatments, each with its own ethical questions, the scope of this thesis will be limited to *in vitro* fertilization. This thesis will be developed as the logical conclusion of five propositions: first, human life begins at conception; second, human dignity begins at conception; third, the Bible commands justice for the vulnerable; fourth, IVF destroys human life; and fifth, IVF dishonors human dignity.

Human Life Begins at Conception

A fundamental principle in the argument against IVF is the fact that human life begins at conception, which is proven true both biologically and biblically.

From a biological perspective, human embryos are living human beings because of their composition as well as their behavior. As bioethicists George and Lee (2009) explain:

The human embryo is the same individual as the human organism at subsequent stages of development. The evidence for this is the genetic and epigenetic composition of this being—that is, the embryo's molecular composition is such that he or she has the internal resources to develop actively himself or herself to the next mature stage—and the typical embryo's regular, predictable and observable behaviour—that is, the embryo's actual progression through an internally coordinated and complex sequence of development to his or her mature stage. (George & Lee, 2009)

In other words, the molecular composition of human embryos is such that they not only *can* but also, under facilitating circumstances, *will* develop themselves continually into mature human adults. Such information leads Ph.D. Maureen Condi (2014) to conclude:

The conclusion that human life begins at sperm-egg fusion is uncontested, objective, based on the universally accepted scientific method of distinguishing different cell types from each other and on ample scientific evidence (thousands of independent, peer-reviewed publications)... A neutral examination of the evidence merely establishes the onset of a new human life at a scientifically well-defined “moment of conception,” a conclusion that unequivocally indicates that human embryos from the one-cell stage forward are indeed living individuals of the human species; i.e., human beings. (Condi, 2014)

Thus, a biological understanding of the human embryo's composition and capability logically supports the reality of human life from the moment of conception onward.

Furthermore, human life beginning at conception is also evident from a biblical perspective; first and foremost, in Scripture itself. Three examples will suffice.

First, in Psalm 51, David traces his own sinful human nature back to the moment of his conception, writing, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (*ESV Journaling Study Bible*, Psalm 51.5). David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, views both his life and his unique personhood as beginning at conception, when he was a microscopic embryo.

Additionally, the LORD sends an angel in Judges 13 to foretell the birth of the judge Samson, and the angel refers to the unborn child as Samson himself:

And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines (Judg. 13.3-5).

Samson was to be a Nazirite – kept from eating unclean foods, drinking wine, or cutting his hair as a symbol of his devotion to God – and as such, these restrictions were put into place through his mother while Samson was yet in her womb. As John R. Ling (2022) elaborates on this passage, “what was going to be in Manoah’s wife’s womb was going to be the real Samson, minute but with real identity – it was Samson from conception, Samson from fertilisation, Samson from day one” (Ling, 2022).

Further, Jesus Christ Himself was incarnated as an embryo, fully alive, truly man and truly God. Ling continues:

In Matthew 1:20 Joseph is told, “...what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Mary was carrying the embryonic Immanuel – the ‘God with us’. Here indeed is “very

God and very man”.³ And how did the incarnated God start His earthly life? As a zygote – just as we did (Ling, 2022).

Jesus was not only born as a human, but *conceived* as a human by the power of the Holy Spirit. The embryo in Mary’s womb *was* Jesus the Messiah; a beautiful attestation both to the glorious humility of Christ and the vivid reality of when human life begins.

The Bible evidently holds that David, Samson, Jesus—and logically, every other human being—began as unique and living persons from the point of conception onward.

Additionally, this biblical validation of embryonic human life has been attested to by the church and by Christian theologians. For example, theologian John Calvin, when addressing abortion in his Commentaries on Exodus 21, writes, “for the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, (homo,) and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy” (“Exodus 21,” n.d.). Additionally, the Catechism of the Catholic Church declares forthrightly, “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (“Catechism,” n.d.). Similarly, the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention made the church’s stance quite clear with the statement “Every human being is made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27-28) and is thus to be respected and protected from the moment of fertilization until natural death, without regard to developmental stage or location” (“On the ethical realities,” 2024). Although several denominations and leading figures lack such clarity on this issue, it is evident that the overarching position of the Christian church affirms human life at conception.

Therefore, both biology and the Bible attest that human life begins at the moment of conception, meaning an embryo is a human life.

Human Dignity Begins at Conception

Within a Christian worldview, the life of the human embryo is not only real but also sacred, possessing human dignity and deserving human rights. Philosophy professor Christopher Kaczor provides an informative analysis on human dignity as he writes, “The idea of human dignity is that all human beings, regardless of class, creed, color, or culture, enjoy the same basic value, deserve fair treatment in public and private, and merit the same basic protection by law” (Kaczor, n.d.). From a Christian perspective, life is sacred because it is made in the image of God. The first chapter of Genesis declares, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1.27). This truth is repeated in God’s command in Genesis 9: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen. 9.6). Because humans are created in the image of God, each and every human life is fully deserving of dignity, rights, and protection. This is true also for an embryo; neither age nor level of development nor anything else can lessen the dignity of one human life, even an embryonic human life, compared to another. If life begins at conception, then human dignity begins there as well.

The Bible Demands Justice for the Vulnerable

Another key Christian claim is the scriptural mandate that justice be done for the vulnerable. Psalm 82:3-4 is one of many such passages, as the LORD commands, “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 82.3-4). Justice requires protecting and maintaining the rights of the most weak and vulnerable members of society. If justice must be done for the “weak,” “fatherless,” and “needy,” who fits the description more

than an unwanted embryo? Psalm 10:14 and 17-18 displays the assurance that when injustice is done, God remembers and will one day bring justice:

But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless... O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more. (Psalm 10.14-18)

Because God's Word demands universal justice for the vulnerable, He demands justice for the unborn.

IVF Destroys Human Life

Understanding that embryonic human life is sacred and deserving of justice, it is next crucial to examine the intensely significant and unavoidable destruction of human life that IVF entails. This will be illustrated by considering the treatment of human embryos at three stages in the IVF process – embryos before transfer to the womb, embryos who are transferred to the womb, and embryos who are not transferred to the womb – before concluding with the overall rate of survival for embryos in IVF.

Upon the moment of conception in the petri dish, each tiny embryo steps into life with the odds stacked near-impossibly against him. As aforementioned, M.D. Cynthia Murdock estimates that only 30-50% of created embryos will survive to day 5 or 6, the point at which transfer to the womb can take place. Even then, it is likely that less than half of *those* embryos will be considered “viable for transfer” (Murdock, 2025). In other words, by the fifth or sixth day

of life, three quarters of the initial group of embryos will either be dead or unable to be transferred into the womb.

If an embryo is fortunate enough to be transferred, he or she remains gravely at risk. A 2023 Forbes article written by Becca Stanek and medically reviewed by M.D. Sanaz Ghadal records the 2021 live birth rate after embryo transfer for women of various ages using IVF. For women under 35, the live birth rate was 44.5%; for women aged 35-37, the rate was 32.4%; for women 38-40, the rate was 28.2%; for women 41-42, the rate was 9.6%; and for women over 42, the live birth rate was a mere 2.9% (Stanek, 2023). Clearly, the likelihood of an implanted embryo actually being born alive is shockingly low and drastically decreases with the woman's age! Additionally, Rachel Robertson with MedPage Today (2024) explains that when multiple embryos are transferred into the womb, there is a chance of a twin or triplet pregnancy. While such a situation naturally poses unique challenges, it is a unique blessing for the family; yet often, parents are heartlessly counseled to abort one or more of the "extra" babies. Robertson writes, "IVF patients who end up with triplet pregnancies are counseled on their options and most chose fetal reduction, where an ultrasound-guided injection into one or more of the fetuses stops the fetal heart" (Robertson, 2024). In other words, the children these parents spent thousands of dollars to conceive and implant are now unwanted and therefore killed.

For embryos not transferred into the womb, the options are even more horrifying. As previously referenced from Amy Demma, Esq., the parents have five choices: cryopreservation, adoption by another couple, donation to medical research, "compassionate transfer", or outright destruction (Demma, 2013). If the embryos are frozen in a cryopreservation facility, the likelihood of being eventually implanted in a mother is slim – more often, they are abandoned or

indefinitely left “on ice.” As Mohammed Reza Sadeghi writes with the National Library of Medicine in 2024:

According to current practice in IVF centers, a limited number of frozen embryos will be birthed by their genetic mothers, yet thousands more belong to parents who are undecided about the destiny of their embryos. Therefore, millions of embryos have been stored and abandoned for decades, despite the fact that more frozen embryos are added to this abandoned population in all IVF centers worldwide every day. (Sadeghi, 2024)

Yet this undefined state of abandonment is one of the few situations that does not automatically result in the embryos’ death. If they are put up for adoption, they may also survive, but this scenario is very rare. If they are donated to scientific research, they will inevitably be destroyed, according to EWTN News (Arnold, 2024). If they are “compassionately transferred,” this means that the embryos are implanted into the mother’s womb at the wrong time for a pregnancy, which ends in a miscarriage and the embryos’ death. Most often, the parents will simply choose to have their children directly destroyed. MedPage Today in 2024 writes that “Richlin said that 99% of the time, when people are done with family building and have no need for any remaining embryos, they opt to have them discarded” (Robertson, 2024). Ultimately, the unfortunate “extra” embryos will almost certainly be indefinitely abandoned or die.

What does this mean for the overall survival rate of embryos? A 2024 article by Emma Waters with the Heritage Foundation, taking into account the number of reported IVF cycles in 2021, the estimation that 10 embryos are created per cycle, and the total number of live births in the US in 2021, concludes that “*only 2.3 percent of all embryos created in the United States result in the live birth of a baby*” (Waters, 2024). This means that for every one hundred human beings that the IVF industry creates, ninety-eight of them will not be born.

Millions of tiny lives begin in a petri dish and will never draw a breath. The Heritage Foundation provides a “conservative estimate” that IVF cycles in 2021 created 4.1 million embryos (Waters, 2024). Due to the incredibly low survival rate that IVF entails, over 4 million of these embryos were either destroyed or placed in indefinite storage with little hope of retrieval. If this estimate is accurate, then in one year IVF cost the United States thousands more human lives than both World Wars put together! IVF, in fact, takes more embryonic human lives than abortion, as noted by Reverend Jonathan Connor with Lutheran Family Services (2024). He writes:

One researcher shared information from 2019, writing, “... in 2019 out of a million embryos involved in IVF cycles, 84,000 made it to term – the remaining 900,000 did not. By comparison, in the same year, the CDC reported 629,898 abortions.” [10] These numbers are staggering. **IVF, a procedure that is routinely promoted as “pro-life,” brought death to more tiny babies than abortion, a procedure which unequivocally aims for death.** (Connor, 2024)

The irony is astounding and the truth would break any heart. IVF, the beacon of hope to so many families longing for children, is at its core rampant with the brazen slaughter of millions of innocent babies who will never be given a chance at life. Because IVF destroys human life, it is morally wrong.

IVF Dishonors Human Dignity

Not only does IVF put an end to millions of human lives, it also dishonors human dignity at every step of the process. To repeat Professor Kaczor’s definition, “The idea of human dignity is that all human beings, regardless of class, creed, color, or culture, enjoy the same basic value,

deserve fair treatment in public and private, and merit the same basic protection by law” (Kaczor, n.d.). Human dignity encompasses both the value of human life and the natural rights deserved by all people. IVF specifically ignores human dignity by violating each embryo’s right to life, right to bodily integrity, right to a mother and father, and right to legal protection.

First, IVF blatantly and utterly violates embryos’ rights to life. The statistics of embryo survival have already been thoroughly analyzed in the previous section; for example, the reality that only 2.3% of embryos created will actually live to birth, as Emma Waters with the Heritage Foundation reports. Even for children successfully born through IVF, however, the risk of health problems is significant. As Waters continues, “And the outcomes of the process are not neutral. Children born through IVF have a higher likelihood of cancer, autism, minor cleft pallet, or a congenital heart defect” (Waters, 2024). It is impossible for parents to undergo the IVF process without putting the life and long-term health of their children on the line.

Second, IVF deeply violates embryos’ rights to bodily integrity. As explained by the Child Rights International Network, “Everyone, including children, has the right to make decisions about their own body and to be protected from any harm or interference against their body without their consent. This right is summed up by the principle of bodily autonomy and integrity” (“Bodily autonomy,” n.d.). That IVF disregards such a right is unfortunately obvious. Embryos are left to die in petri dishes, dehydrated and frozen in liquid nitrogen, or torn apart in the name of scientific research. Writing specifically on the immorality of human embryo research, bioethicists George and Lee state:

If, as we believe, human embryos are human beings who deserve the same basic respect we accord to human beings at later developmental stages, then research that involves deliberately dismembering embryonic humans in order to use their cells for the benefit of

others is inherently wrong... human embryos are indeed human beings and, as such, deserve a level of respect that is incompatible with treating them as disposable research material. (George & Lee, 2009)

Not only is the right to bodily integrity violated by the treatment and destruction of un-transferred embryos, but the very process of selecting which embryo to transfer is inherently dehumanizing. According to the Heritage Foundation in 2024, the vast majority of IVF clinics offer pre-implantation genetic testing, allowing parents to select an embryo based on genetic issues, sex, and presumed eye, hair, and skin color (Waters, 2024). Further, in 2026, Life Site News reported on the innovative new company NucleusIVF+, which presents the parents' embryos in a digital "menu" and allows them to "pick your best baby." As the article notes, "this IVF practice, which literally kills off "less desirable" embryonic humans to favor the "ideal" child by the parents' own standards, is eugenic by definition" (Mangiaracina, 2026). Such an appalling process and its cruel consequences leads Reverend Jonathan Connor to conclude:

tiny humans are being graded. Imagine having someone line up a classroom of children and grade their worthiness to live based on his subjective assessment. Would you end the lives of the children deemed suboptimal? Why do we permit it with IVF? (Connor, 2024)

In principle and practice, IVF devalues human dignity by violating the right to bodily integrity.

Third, IVF violates embryos' rights to a mother and father. As the childrens'-rights-based organization Them Before Us declares simply, "Children have a natural right to their mother and father... A child's legal right to their parents may vary, the natural right children have to both their mother and father is indisputable" ("Children Have Rights," n.d.). Unfortunately, the sad reality is that IVF opens the door to conceiving children through third-party donors or surrogacy,

practices which inherently cripple the family structure children naturally deserve. Katy Faust, president of Them Before Us, explains:

The left has made multiple attempts to redefine infertility, mandate IVF access for single and same-sex couples, and insist that subsidized access to #BigFertility is the next front in LGBT equality. A “right to parenthood” via a “right to IVF” is a critical step in the overhaul of the nuclear family, the only family form that unites a child’s mother and father for life... While we don’t know how many children are made motherless and fatherless through IVF (because #BigFertility operates virtually regulation-free), estimates range between 30,000 and 60,000 per year. (Faust, 2024)

For surrogates, same-sex couples, or single parents, IVF is usually the chosen path to parenthood. As a result, thousands of children every year are intentionally made motherless or fatherless in clear violation of their rights.

Fourth and finally, IVF ignores embryos’ rights to legal protection. Amanda Stirone Mansfield, J.D., with the Charlotte Lozier Institute (2024) explains that some countries regulate the number of embryos created or transferred, the maximum number of years embryos can be frozen, or the permissibility of pre-implantation genetic testing or destructive scientific research on embryos. The United States, however, does not. As Mansfield writes, “the United States has virtually no IVF regulations regarding the treatment of human embryos, allowing for the creation, destruction, and indefinite freezing of countless embryonic human beings” (Mansfield, 2024). This denial of deserved legal protection is evident both in the cruel treatment of unwanted embryos and in the dismissive dehumanization of embryos who are being adopted. According to the Embryo Adoption Awareness Center, the troubling truth is that “in the U.S. embryo adoption is not considered a legal form of adoption because embryos are considered property, not people.

Therefore the process is governed by property contract law, not by adoption law” (“The Legal Side,” 2014). Even as IVF promises children to yearning families, it denies those children basic dignity by refusing to treat them as children at all.

Embryos are people, deserving of dignity and possessing the natural rights to life, bodily integrity, a mother and father, and legal protection. Because IVF thoroughly dishonors human dignity, it is morally wrong.

Thus far this paper has defended the claims that human life and human dignity begin at conception, that the Bible demands justice for the vulnerable, and that IVF destroys and dishonors human life and human dignity. Therefore, the logical conclusion of these premises is that IVF is not morally justifiable within a Christian worldview.

Some Objections

Of course, despite the arguments presented, the fact remains that 70% of Americans believe IVF access is “a good thing,” according to Pew Research Center. (Borelli, 2024) Proponents tend to advocate three primary justifications for IVF: first, that an embryo is a potential person, not a real person, so destroying an embryo is not actually taking a life; second, that overcoming infertility is biblical, so fertility treatments like IVF are biblical as well; and third, that IVF is a personal decision, so an objective moral judgment on it is impossible.

“An Embryo is a Potential Person, Not a Real Person”

Perhaps the most widespread argument in favor of IVF is the claim that an embryo is a potential person rather than a real person, a distinction often used to justify the taking of embryonic life. For example, Richard J. Paulson, M.D., in a journal for Fertility and Sterility

(2017), argues that “handling an embryo with the potential to produce a pregnancy is not the same as handling a human life.” He defends this argument firstly on the grounds that “life is a continuum,” so a fertilized egg, while alive, is no more a human being than an unfertilized egg: “From a biological perspective, no new life has been created.” Secondly, he advocates that because an embryo retains the potential to split into twins when implanted, it lacks the individuality necessary to be considered a human person (Paulson, 2017).

This paper has already explored the biological and biblical arguments for life at conception, but it is valuable to consider Paulson’s claim in further detail. If this argument is true, that an embryo is merely the potential for a human life, then humans themselves are relegated to a *process* rather than a *being*. Bioethicists George & Lee (2009) thus refute Paulson’s argument with the truth of what it means to be human:

Whether a new human organism exists is a question to which the answer must be either yes or no—there is no in between. If a human organism exists, then he or she exists as a whole and not just partly, and this is true for all the times that he or she exists. Embryos are whole human beings, at the early stage of their maturation. The term ‘embryo’, similar to the terms ‘infant’ and ‘adolescent’, refers to a determinate and enduring organism at a particular stage of development. Just as you and I once were infants, so too you and I once were embryos. Each of us came into being as an embryo, and developed by an internally directed and gapless process from the embryonic into and through the fetal, infant, child and adolescent stages, and into adulthood with our determinateness and unity fully intact. (George & Lee, 2009)

The logic is clear – a human organism is fully a human organism at every stage of development. An embryo may be microscopic and look nothing like an infant, but he or she is just as much a

human person at the moment of conception as at eighty years afterward. Here the words of Dr. Seuss may be especially pertinent: “A person’s a person no matter how small” (Seuss, 1982).

Not only biologically and biblically but also logically, embryos are real persons from the moment of conception onward. Thus, killing an embryo is as morally unacceptable as killing anyone else.

“Overcoming Infertility is Biblical”

Another common rationalization for IVF, especially in Christian circles, is the assertion that overcoming infertility is biblical, and because IVF can overcome infertility, it is perfectly justified. A 2025 article from CNY Fertility argues thus:

In the bible, there are many instances in which infertility is described as a source of suffering that God has compassion for. (Gen. 30:1) (1 Sam. 1:5–10). There are also various examples of God intervening with miracles to help women overcome infertility.

Therefore the article concludes:

While some perceive IVF as a challenge to the doctrines of Christianity, most Christians view IVF as a way to overcome the suffering of infertility and live in alignment with traditional family values and Christian teachings on love, compassion, and the sanctity and joy of new life. (CNY Fertility, 2025)

Now, there is some validity in the premise of this argument. Is it true that infertility is “a source of suffering that God has compassion for”? Are there examples of God miraculously allowing women to “overcome infertility”? Yes and yes! Psalm 113:9 declares, “He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 113.9). Scripture makes it clear that children are a priceless gift from God and that having

children is a natural and right desire for married couples. In fact, the first command that God gives to Adam and Eve, the first people and, incidentally, the first married couple, is “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1.28).

Does the worthy *end* of having children, however, justify any possible *means* of getting there? Absolutely not. Although the goal of IVF rightly recognizes the value of life, the IVF process inherently destroys it. This paper has already elaborated on IVF’s abundant destruction of and clear disregard for human life. Thus, while it is true that overcoming infertility is a biblical value, IVF is a case where the ends do not justify the means.

“IVF is a Personal Decision”

A third claim often made by IVF’s proponents is that IVF is a personal decision which each couple should make for themselves; thus an objective moral judgment on it is impossible. Nearly every fertility organization advocates this right up front. For example, Mid-Iowa Fertility writes, “The choice to pursue IVF is ultimately a personal one” (“Navigating the Path,” n.d.). An article from American Surrogacy elaborates further:

No matter what stance religious leaders or doctrines take the decision to pursue IVF or surrogacy is deeply personal. As a Christian, you have the freedom to consult your faith, pray for guidance, and make a choice that aligns with your convictions. It’s important to remember that ultimately, the decision is between you, your partner and God. (“Christian Views on IVF,” n.d.)

In other words, because IVF is a choice made privately by each family in their own way, there can be no absolute moral judgment on whether IVF is objectively right or wrong. In fact, by that

logic, an objective statement like the thesis of this paper would be inconsiderate, uneducated, and arrogant!

It is first important to address the truth behind this claim. It is indeed true that many details of infertility are private information and should be personally dealt with by the couple in question. Additionally, infertility truly is deeply painful and the families suffering it deserve gentleness, respect, and protection. Even so, it cannot be said that IVF is a strictly personal decision. Why? Because, as previously explained, the IVF process inherently involves the taking of human life. Murder is never a strictly personal decision. Therefore, IVF can not be a personal decision either.

Conclusion

In vitro fertilization is a fertility treatment bearing widespread support yet grave ramifications. In fact, as has been demonstrated, IVF cannot be morally justifiable within a Christian worldview. This paper has supported this thesis through five logical propositions: first, human life begins at conception; second, human dignity begins at conception; third, the Bible demands justice for the vulnerable; fourth, IVF destroys human life; and fifth, IVF dishonors human dignity. Additionally, three common arguments in favor of IVF have been addressed: first, that an embryo is a potential person, not a real person; second, that overcoming infertility is biblical; and third, that IVF is a personal decision. These have been refuted through the reality that embryos are real persons from the moment of conception, the logic that the ends don't justify the means, and the truth that endangering the lives of others is not a personal decision.

Is there any hope, then, for infertile couples to have a child? The answer is yes! Recent years have seen a rise in restorative reproductive medicine, or RRM; according to the

International Institute for Restorative Reproductive Medicine, “This growing medical discipline focuses on diagnosing and treating underlying causes of infertility, offering couples a path to natural conception by optimizing reproductive health” (“With Infertility Rates Rising,” 2025). By treating infertility as a symptom rather than a diagnosis, this method seeks to improve patients’ holistic health as well as their fertility. The article continues:

“Studies from five different countries all show significant success rates using RRM to treat infertility, even in patients who previously have tried other infertility treatments,” reports Dr. Joseph Stanford, IIRRM Director of Research. “...On average more than 50% of couples who complete their RRM treatment will have a live birth, and higher rates are achieved with continuing care.” (“With Infertility Rates Rising,” 2025)

Restorative reproductive medicine offers a hopeful and healthy option for fertility care.

There is a point, however, at which some couples simply cannot have a child without IVF. While this is deeply sad, the fact remains that no one is owed a child. There is no “right” to parenthood. While infertility is a heartbreaking affliction, it is never an excuse for injustice.

What, then, should Christians do in a world where IVF is not only possible, but popular? In words often attributed to Edmund Burke, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing” (Quote Origin, 2010). To put it simply, therefore, Christians must know the truth and walk in it.

Christians must know the truth about IVF by studying the shocking facts, understanding key arguments, and being prepared to speak honestly with others. Nearly everyone will at some point know someone struggling with infertility; Christians must be ready to reach out as appropriate with scriptural wisdom, compassion, and gospel-centered healing thanks to the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, in society, Christians can support organizations such as Them Before Us or Snowflakes Embryo Adoption as they seek proactive change. On a national level, IVF is currently impacting elections and legislation, further demanding Christian awareness, action, and advocacy.

For no matter the technology or the confusion or the pain, Dr. Seuss is right: “A person’s a person, no matter how small” (Seuss, 1982).

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