

To Be or Not to Be...a Clone

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We have read about Dolly (the cloned sheep of Scotland), cloned Holstein calves in Japan, and more recently, an unconfirmed report from Seoul, Korea, that researchers have cloned a human embryo. The debate among scientists, theologians and the public regarding the propriety of banning or permitting adult human cloning continues with full force. When speaking of producing an adult human clone, cloning may be defined as the genetic asexual replication of an identical you (genetically, not necessarily behaviorally).

"To Be or Not to Be...a Clone" remains a multifaceted issue. This discussion concerns, not only the scriptural understanding of "what is a child?," but also the dangers that "the giving and sharing of love between a husband and wife" might be replaced by harmful human experimentation seeking to (re)produce a "child" that fits certain physical characteristics and narcissistic desires. Those who support the cloning of a "child" to assist infertile couples would argue with the following statement by J. A. Robertson, Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law: "Cloning is important because it is the first of several positive means of genetic selection that may be sought by families seeking to have and raise healthy, biologically related offspring." However, George J. Annas, Professor of Law, Boston University Schools of Medicine and Public Health, spoke to the contrary, saying: "Cloning would...alter what it means to be human by replicating a living or dead human being asexually to produce a person with a single genetic parent."

The procreation of a child is the work of God, if it is His will, through the one-flesh union of a husband and wife. While there may be appropriate scientific uses of replicating human DNA to produce pharmaceutical drugs or vaccines for the treatment and cure of genetic diseases, the use of this technology to make a "child," who is really the identical twin of the person from whom the cloned cells originated is to make adult human cloning an idol.

It corrupts the biblical teaching of marriage and procreation as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. As these chapters teach, a child is begotten of a man and a woman. Yet, cloning is being presented as another reproductive technology available to the infertile husband and wife, single man or woman, and homosexuals who are seeking an offspring.

Cloning, however, is being presented as another reproductive technology available to the infertile husband and wife, a single man or woman, and homosexuals who are seeking an offspring. This approach places the couple who seeks a child in this way, contrary to the biblical doctrine of marriage and procreation. Genesis 1 and 2 teaches us that a child is begotten of a husband and wife. Cloning, as a method of procreation,

was not given to the husband-wife relationship to be or to do. Cloning is not procreation, but asexual reproduction of "self."

When or if this technology ever becomes available, Christians are reminded that procreation is God's work given to the union of a husband and wife. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender, Professor, Valparaiso University, writes: "Understanding procreation as appropriate only within the bond of mutual love of husband and wife will, first, be good for the loving relationship itself...we can learn again to think of marriage as a basic form of life within which procreation ought to take place..." The use of technology must remain in service to God's Word.

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