“Should a Single Christian Woman Use In Vitro Fertilization?”

We have an unmarried, believing woman in our church who is considering in vitro fertilization. I believe this is against God’s intent for marriage and the family according to Genesis 2:21-25, and also Paul’s teaching about marriage in Ephesians 5:18ff. Your input with other Scriptures and your ideas would be much appreciated. Perhaps you can suggest a good book or pamphlet on this subject that we could give this woman who seems intent on her mission.

I am in full agreement with your reasoning.

In your discussion of Genesis 2 may I suggest including that the notion of the two becoming one flesh certainly includes the production of children that are a clear expression of this principle. From two people has come one person or one (new) flesh. While the children of single parents are to be honored and supported in our culture once they are conceived, it is certainly not a part of God’s initial plan. To deliberately plan on being a single parent from the beginning implies selfish motives. The child is a commodity, something to meet a need or provide something for the parent. The story of Hannah and Samuel in 1 Samuel 1 indicates that Hannah saw parenting as a gift and Samuel himself as a gift from God, not a right.

If this unmarried woman is going to seek parenthood via in vitro she will also need a sperm donor. That directly violates the one-flesh principle above since the sperm donor will not be her husband. This also creates a necessary “relationship” with this man as the father of her child. This is inherently unwise and creates the very real possibility of future disputes and tensions with no clear guidelines for resolution.

She would be at the mercy of the court and that particular judge as to what relationship this man will have with her and her child. Even when the donation is anonymous, it won't necessarily remain anonymous throughout the life of the child. Children have been granted access to the identity of anonymous sperm donors who fathered them. Some men simply won't care. But what if he does? What if he desires to know something about the mother of his child as well as the child himself/herself?

A booklet I can recommend is from the BioBasic series from Kregel Publications titled *Basic Questions on Sexuality and Reproductive Technology*. While this circumstance is not directly addressed, questions 5, 6, 7 and 13 do relate some of the principles I have discussed above. This booklet can be obtained from the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity at www.cbhd.org.

I pray this helps.

Respectfully,

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President

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