



**LOVING
YOUR IVF
NEIGHBOR:
IN VITRO
FERTILIZATION,
ASSISTED
REPRODUCTIVE
TECHNOLOGIES,
& LOVING YOUR
NEIGHBOR AS
YOURSELF**



**Rescue
Those**

Loving Your IVF Neighbor: In Vitro Fertilization, Assisted Reproduction Technologies, and Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself

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Loving Your IVF Neighbor written by Dusty Deevers

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IN VITRO FERTILIZATION, ASSISTED REPRODUCTION
TECHNOLOGIES, AND LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

by Dusty Deevers

*For my family
at home
and in Christ*



www.RescueThose.com

Rescue Those exists to educate, equip, and mobilize the saints in the name of Christ, and for the glory of God, to rescue the preborn being led to slaughter.



Pull out your phone and point your camera at this QR code to watch our feature length documentary titled *A Storm Comes Rolling Down the plain: When the Kingdom of Christ Collides with the Culture of Death.*



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GLOSSARY¹

Assisted Reproductive Therapy (ART). The use of technology to assist human reproduction in the treatment of infertility. This subject involves procedures such as *in-vitro* fertilization (IVF), intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), cryopreservation of gametes or embryos, or the use of fertility medication.

Cryopreservation/Cryogenically freeze. Maintenance of the viability of excised tissues or organs at extremely low temperatures.

Egg retrieval. Surgical procedure in which a doctor removes mature eggs from the ovaries for use in assisted reproductive technology.

Embryo. A developing child from the fourth day after fertilization to the end of the eighth week.

Embryologist. A scientist, typically found in a fertility clinic or lab that is involved in reproductive research or fertility assessments. Embryologists are scientists, not physicians, and cannot perform medical procedures on a patient, diagnose conditions or prescribe medication.

Frozen Embryo Transfer (FET). When the cryopreserved embryos, which were created in a full IVF cycle, are thawed and manually transferred to a uterus.

Frozen Embryo Transfer Implantation Time (FETIT). Although the timeline may vary somewhat from case to case, the typical frozen embryo transfer timeline is as follows: *Pretesting, hormonal preparation of the uterus, embryo thawing, and transfer.*

Intracytoplasmic sperm injection. An advanced reproductive procedure performed in an embryology lab during an IVF treatment in which a single sperm is injected directly into a woman's egg in order to create a fertilized egg, namely, an embryo.

***In vitro* fertilization (IVF).** The process by which conception takes place in a laboratory medium; the term literally means fertilization "in glass."

¹ Thank you, Lacey Scalf, for compiling this helpful glossary.

Morphology grade. The shape or appearance of cells in the embryo. Embryo grading systems based on division rate and morphology are expressed on a number or letter scale. Embryos are graded on a scale of 1-5 with 1 representing embryos with the best morphology and are given two letter grades (A-C). Those with the highest morphology grade are considered to have the highest implantation potential.

Non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT). Non-invasive test performed on a maternal blood sample that poses no risk to pregnancy. Used for detection of fetal chromosomal abnormalities.

Petri dish. A shallow, circular, transparent dish with a flat lid, used in laboratories for the culture of microorganisms.

Preimplantation genetic testing (PGT). An early form of prenatal genetic diagnosis where abnormal embryos are identified, thereby allowing transfer of genetically normal embryos.

Selective reduction. Refers to the practice of reducing the number of fetuses in a pregnancy after a genetic evaluation that identifies fetus abnormalities or if a couple decides to reduce the number of babies to a more manageable number. *This is a form of abortion.*

Singleton infant. The birth of only one child during a single delivery with a gestation of 20 weeks or more.

Standard insemination. Process where the sperm and eggs are cultured together in a dish, and the sperm must penetrate the egg on their own, similar to natural insemination.

Supernumerary embryo. These “surplus” embryos are created in the context of artificial reproduction, still potentially usable for reproductive purposes, but not chosen to be implanted.

Vitrification. Process in which water molecules are removed and replaced with a higher level of preserving solution before being placed in liquid nitrogen. Freezing occurs in milliseconds and can help prevent cell degradation of the embryo. Once a vitrification procedure has been performed, the embryos will be stored in specific straws in liquid nitrogen banks at -196°C until used.

INTRODUCTION

Do you know someone who has struggled with infertility? Have you personally been confronted by the pain and flood of emotions and whirlwind of what-ifs? Infertility is a painful and sensitive subject that affects many people. While considering this challenging topic, we want to care for you well, point you to God's holy and wise care for His creation, His love for His own people in the life of His own Son, and direct you as to how God's Word would have you love your IVF neighbor as yourself.²

IVF By the Numbers

In July 1978, Louise Brown was the first child successfully born after her mother received *in vitro* (meaning: in glass) fertilization (IVF) treatment from Robert G. Edwards, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.³ The first IVF birth in the United States was in 1981. Fast forward to 2015, more than 72,913 babies were born in the U.S. in that year alone as a result of non-donor Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) procedures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that ART accounts for slightly less than two percent of total U.S. births.^{4,5} *In vitro* fertilization widely has been hailed, even by Christians, as a solution to infertility's deeply personal and painful journey. But should it be?

In the United Kingdom, between 1991 and July 2011, over three million embryos were created in Petri dishes through IVF.

Around 50%, that is "1,455,832 embryos were discarded in the

² We are very grateful for the editorial efforts of several saints: CR Cali, author of *The Doctrine of Balaam* and Pastor at Sermon in the Park, Victoria, TX; James Silberman, Communications Director, Free the States, member at Grace Community Church of Elgin, OK; Michael Coughlin, Pastor at Covenant Bible Church of Canal Winchester, Ohio; Lacey Scalf, Outpatient Surgical Clinic Nurse, Veterans Health Administration, Nathan Weisser of Bright Rider Media for artwork; and, Brett Baggett, a Pastor of Ekklesia Muskogee, OK, and President of Rescue Those.

³ BBC News. "Louise Brown: World's first IVF baby's family archive unveiled." July 24, 2018. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-44940929>

⁴ National Conference of State Legislatures. "State Laws Related to Insurance Coverage for Infertility Treatment," March 12, 2021. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/insurance-coverage-for-infertility-laws.aspx>

⁵ "Since its introduction in the U.S. in 1981, 1.9% of all babies in the U.S. are born through IVF and other assisted reproductive technologies (ART)." *WebMD*, Medically reviewed by Nivin Todd. "Infertility and *In Vitro* Fertilization." August 01, 2021. <https://www.webmd.com/infertility-and-reproduction/guide/in-vitro-fertilization?page=2>

course of treatment, 101,605 were given for research in destructive experiments, and around 25%, 764,311 were frozen for later use. . . .The rest were implanted, resulting in 94,090 births.”⁶ This translates to 32 embryos being created for *one* every live birth.

Between 1978 and 2018, an estimated eight million children were born worldwide using IVF.⁷ If the numbers from the U.K. hold true for the rest of the world, and about 1 out of every 30 embryos conceived in a Petri dish actually result in birth, then for those eight million births by IVF, it may have taken up to 240 million embryos, 120 million of whom were destroyed, and six million of whom were frozen.

Currently, over two million babies are born each year from IVF. Most embryologists confirm that as of early 2022 there are 1.8 million cryo-incarcerated embryos. That number grows by 18% each year. The next year it will be 2.124 million, the year after, 2.5 million frozen embryos. It is unethical, unjust, and unrighteous to create millions of cryo-orphans (or even one) and destroy so many lives just to have biological children.⁸

If Not the Church, Then Who?

How does God’s Word direct us to think about *in vitro* fertilization? How does King Jesus, by Whom, through Whom, and for Whom all embryos exist, command our attention and affections regarding *in vitro* fertilization?

In this booklet, we want to ask and answer the question, “What must you and I do to love our IVF-embryonic neighbors as ourselves?” Our aim is, with our Creator’s help, graciously, to bring before your conscience the realities of IVF so you will respond in faith by loving your embryonic neighbor. Why does this matter? Millions of our embryonic neighbors are being led to slaughter every year by IVF and Assisted Reproductive

⁶ APFLI, Physicians for Life. “1.5 Million Embryos Killed Through IVF Since 1991 in Britain (7/2011).” July 28, 2011. <https://www.physiciansforlife.org/15-million-embryos-killed-through-ivf-since-1991-in-britain-72011/>

⁷ European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology. “More than 8 million babies born from IVF since the world’s first in 1978,” *ScienceDaily*. July 3, 2018. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180703084127.htm>

⁸ It is difficult to find solid numbers on how many embryos are created, then discarded, then selectively reduced, then locked away in freezers in the U.S. and around the world. Even though there are woefully few regulations on embryological and Assisted Reproductive Technologies, clinics and laboratories hide and underreport the numbers.

Technologies. Countless others are cryo-incarcerated in frozen prisons. We are creating cryo-orphans for the sake of biological offspring.

Saints, if not the Church, then who will love our unwanted embryonic neighbors as themselves and rescue those surplus “discards” and “rescue those being carried away” to the discard pile and “hold back those stumbling” into an indefinite, icy purgatory (Proverbs 24:11).

To our brothers and sisters who carry the profound and personal weight of infertility, we acknowledge the grief and difficulties and mourn with our brothers and sisters and others who carry the profoundly personal pain of infertility. Simultaneously, because of the steadfast love of the Lord, we long to come alongside you and search God’s wisdom in His Word for His glory, our joy, and the rescue of our embryonic neighbors. As my friend, Dr. Evan Lenow writes in his book *Ethics as Worship*,

“Your loving Father—the One who invented sex and who seeks to fill the world with worshipers—has what is best for us in his mind and on his heart. Thankfully, he has revealed his good moral wisdom to us through his Word.”⁹

The rest of this booklet will address the issue from five different angles. First, you must think about infertility biblically. Second, you must understand IVF and ART. Third, you must concern yourself with life on God’s terms. Fourth, you must obey the sixth commandment. And, last, we will make a few applications. Let us first think about infertility according to God’s Word.

⁹ Liederbach, Mark D., and Evan Lenow. *Ethics as Worship: The Pursuit of Moral Discipleship*. P&R Publishing. 2021. 654.



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