

Is ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION An Option For The Single Christian Woman?

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This issue requires a thoughtful **theological** response.

Theological must be emphasized because too many Christians look for a specific "Thou shalt" or a "Thou shalt not" to determine what is sin rather than getting God's mind through the teachings of Scripture as a whole.

In artificial insemination, a doctor inserts sperm directly into a woman's cervix, fallopian tubes, or uterus to improve the chances of conceiving. Since there is no intercourse involved this procedure should not be considered as fornication or adultery if it is undertaken by a single woman. Any objection to the procedure on these grounds will not find any clear biblical support. This should not lead us to conclude, however, that it is morally permissible for a

single woman to be artificially inseminated because she badly wants to mother a child. Sin in its **most obvious sense is the violation of some known law of God (I John 3:4)**, but this is not the only way we should look at sin. Sin is also deviation from God's perfect standard for our lives, that is, falling short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). I believe we will agree with church father Augustine that "the chief end of man (and woman) is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Is God being glorified in the decision and subsequent action of a single woman to be artificially inseminated? Here are some points to consider:

1. **The biblical ideal is for every child to** be conceived and born as a fruit of marriage and having a father present in their life. This pattern is approved by God throughout the Bible (Gen. 1:27-28; 4:1-2; 9:1; Prov. 27:3-5; Eph. 5:21-6:4; Heb. 13:4). Sometimes life's circumstances are such that one becomes a single parent



entirely out of his or her control. But should a Christian woman purposely set out to be a single mother when she knows (or ought to know) that this is not God's ideal? Data from recent research show that the absence of a father contributes significantly to aggressive behaviour, impulsivity, and hyperactivity in children. These children also experience greater negative emotions such as sadness, withdrawal and anxiety. They are the ones who are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviour, drop out of school, and wind up in jail.

2. A child born of a single mother often faces a crisis of identity even though they are loved by their mother. This child, at some point, will want to know about their father. Does a parent have the right to impose conflict upon a child by deciding upon single parenting through artificial insemination? Is the parent violating the basic rights and needs of their child?

3. In reality the single woman who resorts to artificial insemination is saying, "My desire to conceive a child **must** be met." But is it right to adopt such a posture? The reality of life in our fallen world is that not all women (or men) who desire to marry and have children will be able to do so. This does not mean that they cannot have a fulfilling life, even one involving the nurturing of children. Some Christian options include foster parenting, adopting,

and mentoring. According to UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund), there are roughly 15.1 million double orphans worldwide (Double orphans are children who have lost both parents). Additionally, there are countless children whose parents do not want them or cannot care for them. Surely, Christians have a moral obligation to do what they can to care for these (Deut. 15:11; Job 29:12; Psalm 82:3-4; Prov. 19:17; Isa. 58:10; Matt. 25:35; James 1:27). Single Christians, like all other Christians, should be seeking God to discover their purpose even if it means embracing a life of singleness (Rom. 12:1-2).

Are we to conclude that artificial insemination is inherently wrong? No, we should not. It has its place in a godly context, that is, when a married couple has difficulty conceiving and opts to have the "seed" of the husband (not that of a stranger) implanted in his wife. AIH (Artificial insemination by the husband) is a Christian option, but AID (Artificial insemination by a donor) is not.■
