

Common Sense: Science Says It's a Human Life

For the past nearly 40 years, the fight about abortion has been framed as a religious issue. And while Christians certainly have a specific viewpoint on the issue, there is a truth we need to admit.

Those who aren't Christian—or who don't fully understand what it means to be Christian—won't listen to an argument based on religious grounds alone. The message will get lost in the translation.

So for once, I'm going to try to frame this discussion without ever uttering the words "God," "Jesus" or "Bible." Anyone who knows me will understand I'm anything but an atheist; I'm simply trying to find a way to reach those who have yet to be reached with the message, hopefully in a way they can better understand it.

So let's start from the beginning. We're talking about human reproduction, which is—according to the most commonly accepted scientific definition—"any form of sexual reproduction resulting in the conception of a child."

Those aren't my words, those are the words of the *Journal of Human Reproductive Sciences*. In purely scientific/medical terms, human reproduction is meant to result in the conception of a human child. Let's look at how we get there.

According to the *JHRS*, human reproduction typically involves sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, although it is possible to have conception achieved via artificial insemination. Regardless of the method, the process is always the same.

While at a childbearing age, the woman is constantly creating

ova, or egg cells. Men are constantly creating their own reproductive cells, called sperm. We don't need to go into the details of how the sperm and ovum find each other, but when it happens, something interesting occurs.

The ovum is a haploid cell, meaning it only contains 23 of the 46 chromosomes that lead to a complete human genetic code. In the case of women, only the "X" chromosomes are contained in the ovum.

Likewise, the sperm is also a haploid cell. For men, the sperm can contain either the "X" chromosomes or the "Y" chromosomes, but not both. The type of chromosome the sperm cell contains will eventually determine the gender of the child (a topic for discussion on another day).

But—and this is the most important point—neither the ovum nor the sperm are capable of propagating a species. Both have a limited lifespan, and neither of them can undergo division. In essence, they are each meant to be joined with another cell.

It is that process that creates new life. When the sperm cell penetrates the cell wall of the ovum, it releases its chromosomes. At that moment, the ovum secretes a type of mucous that hardens the cell wall, preventing other sperm cells from penetrating.

Meanwhile, the haploid chromosomal strings from the ovum and the sperm begin to conjoin, creating a diploid set of chromosomes, leading to the creation of DNA. The new DNA contains a complete genetic code that, while it is similar to both the woman and the man, is entirely different from any other cell in the universe.

This process happens in the tiniest fraction of a second, completely immeasurable with the naked eye.

In that fraction of a moment, the new cell with DNA, called a zygote, will determine every attribute of a new human being, a

human child, if you will. The child's gender and height as well as eye, skin and hair color are all locked in—they cannot be changed—from that moment forward.

Regardless of your religious views, or lack thereof, the process is always the same. This is all a matter of fact, supported by irrefutable science that cannot be impacted by whether you believe in Creationism or Darwinism.

Now, let's go back to the *JHRS* definition of human reproduction. Based on it, the moment the zygote is created, it is a human child. Sure, not every zygote will go on to become a living, breathing child, but those instances are statistically few and far between and irrelevant to this discussion.

At the moment of fertilization—the moment of conception, if you will—a human child has been created. That's not a phrase you're going to find in any religious text. In fact, you're likely only going to find it in a scientific text.

So now, let's take a look at a couple of provisions in the U.S. Constitution: the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

The Fifth Amendment, in part reads: "No person shall be ... deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The Fourteenth Amendment, in part, states: "(N)or shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

The dictionary definition of "person" is: a human being, or an entity that has certain capacities and attributes strongly associated with being human. The Fifth Amendment was meant to protect The People from the federal government; the Fourteenth was meant to protect them from their own state governments.

Using scientific fact, accepted mainstream legal definitions, and the accepted interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, we

have determined that a human being is created at the moment of conception, and that human being is endowed with the right to life. And it didn't take a single line of Scripture to get there.

But sharing these facts could open the door for an opportunity to share the Truth with those who desperately need it.