This Is How You Play God

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Introduction:

A. Illustration: Jurassic Park 2 ➔ "Is this how you make dinosaurs? No, this is how you play God!"

B. The technology to do something doesn't make it right and moral

1. The tower of Babel was only the beginning of great trouble! **(Genesis 11:1-9)**
   a. This project stands out as only the first chapter in a story that is still being written today and includes many similar endeavors of men
   b. As we see here, as technology and ability increase, so does man's ability to do things that are ultimately not in his own best interests
2. As technology increases so questions of morality will increase that Christians will have to face and answer from God's word!

C. Over the last several years technological advances and new discoveries by men have brought on an onslaught of questions surrounding cloning and stem cell research:

1. Cloning and stem cell research is not something only found in science fiction books and movies, but is now an ever present reality
2. What should our response be to such matters as Christians – In light of God's word:
   a. First of all: If you are looking for a "Thou Shalt Not Clone" statement from God you are looking in vain because there is not one
   b. What should we do? Open our Bibles and look for principles to help us to navigate through the fog of questions that has been raised regarding this issue!

I. Cloning And Stem Cell Research: More Than Science Fiction

A. What is this matter of "Stem Cell Research" all about?

1. Stem cells have been termed by some as "The Body's Blank Slates" or "Magic Seeds"
   a. They are primitive cells that have the ability to develop into specialized cells
   b. There are several types of stem cells – Some can develop into ANY type of cell and some are restricted to only certain kinds (skin, liver, brain, etc)
   c. Note: It is now being discovered that you can manipulate specialized stem cells to perform functions not assigned for them (blood cell doing brain cell work)
2. The interest in them is due to their potential ability to treat and cure many diseases:
   a. You might remember that in the 2004 Presidential Election stem cell research was one of the major debates ➔ Christopher Reeves often pictured arguing for it.
   b. Stems cells are thought to be the key in finding cures for diseases such as diabetes, kidney trouble, Alzheimer's, leukemia, etc.
   c. In fact – Stem cells are already in common use for treating many problems
3. There are actually several sources for harvesting stem cells:
   a. Adult stem cells are produced by our bodies own organs – They can be harvested and then grown in a laboratory to use in research or treatment
   b. The blood that remains in the umbilical cord after birth is a rich supply of stem cells
   c. They are harvesting stem cells from the remains of aborted babies
   d. They are obtaining stem cells from embryos that have been frozen in fertilization clinics: They produce more embryos then needed and the leftovers are frozen
4. The debate over stem cell research "stems" around how many wish to harvest them: The destruction of human embryos! This is known as "Embryotic Stem Cell Research"
   a. Because they think adult stem cells may lose their potency over time & those from umbilical cord blood are fewer, scientists shy away from the first two sources
   b. Researchers call up people who had used "invitro fertilization" and may have unwanted eggs and sperm asking them to donate them to research
   c. Most who are against abortion would support stem cell research from adult cells and umbilical cord blood because a human life is not taken!
5. Our understanding of stem cells, their working, & their application is ever changing ➔ More is being discovered that proves embryos don't have to die to get them!

B. What is cloning and how does it work?

1. Consider how cloning was done in the case of Dolly the lamb:
    a. Scientists took an egg cell, removed its nucleus (with its DNA), and transplanted the nucleus of another cell (with its DNA) into the egg cell
    b. The egg cell with its new borrowed DNA begins to develop into an embryo and is usually placed in the womb and allowed to grow as any other embryo would
    c. Mark Roberts: "If that doesn't feel 'Dr. Frankenstein' enough for you, you should know that the way they got the egg to accept the new DNA was with tiny pulses of electricity…" ➔ It then accepted the DNA as its own
    d. The embryo grew and Dolly was born – Not the daughter of the mother but in all actuality the mother's own identical twin!
2. Cloning had been done for years on animals, what was so revolutionary about Dolly?
    a. Once DNA specializes to perform a specific function – like heart tissue DNA, liver DNA, etc – It turns off all of the other possible functions
    b. Take out liver DNA & force it into another cell it should only form another liver cell
    c. Wilmut (Dolly's scientist) figured out how to make specialized DNA "reactivate" so that all the function that make up a sheep could develop
    d. They had cloned an ADULT mammal! The flood gates to cloning were open wide!
    e. Remember: "It is important to note here that science or scientists did not create life… they rode, in effect, God's coat tails!" (Mark Roberts)
3. There are essentially two different types of cloning that are practiced:
    a. Reproductive cloning: A cloned embryo is created and implanted with the intent of bringing the clone to term and birthing a genetically identical individual
    b. Therapeutic cloning: The goal is not to produce a cloned being, but rather to create cloned embryos for research purposes, such as harvesting stem cells
    c. Reproductive cloning has basically been banned, for now, but in many places therapeutic cloning is allowed to go on!
4. What is scary is that these are not theories, but are things actually being practiced!
    a. Many are already cloning humans to the embryo stage and then destroying them
    b. Scientists are hard at work for the fame and fortune that awaits the first who can announce to the world, "I cloned the first human!"
    c. Professor Dr. E.A. Carlson (UCLA) contends that there may even be enough DNA in King Tut's mummy to make "a new tut"
    d. Some are avoiding cloning regulations by creating a 99% human and 1% pig, cow, or mouse clone!
4. Let's just think for a moment about the uses for cloning and its slippery slope:
    a. Therapeutic cloning provides stem cells with same DNA to the patient that could be used in medical treatment without fearing rejection by immune system
    b. Reproductive cloning has been suggested to give parents who have lost a child another child which is genetically identical to the child that has died
    c. Some go so far as to suggest that cloning could be used to grow a baby to use for its parts in order to help another that is already born and sick
    d. As you consider these – It's not hard to see the immoral and sinful implications!

C. Cloning and stem cell research is no longer something seen in far-fetched movies and science fiction books, but is an ever present reality we must deal with!

II. Legitimate Questions To Be Answered:

A. First of all, are there justifiable uses for cloning and stem cell research?

1. It is possible for us to run so far in condemning the misuse of this technology that we would condemn something that is right and good:
    a. We certainly do not want to condemn all technology, like one who would say, "If God meant for man to fly He'd given him wings"
    b. Paul writing to Timothy told him to take some wine for medicinal purposes – This

shows medicine is not condemned by the Lord **(I Tim. 5:23)**

c. ***Other passages showing approval for medicine***

2. There seems to be a justifiable use for cloning when it is applied only to the animal world:
   a. The best producing dairy cow, woolliest sheep, and tastiest pig could be cloned
   b. The disregarding of human life's sanctity, is a consequence of the belief that humans are only more highly developed animals in the evolutionary chain
   c. We need to remember that only man is made in the image of God! **(Gen. 1:27)**
3. Stem Cell research has wonderful potential when it is conducted in a manner that preserves the sanctity of human life:
   a. **Quote:** Alta Charo (National Bioethics Advisory Commission – U of Wisc) says, "*They could help regrow heart muscle after a heart attack. They could regrow brain tissues that could be an answer to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Lou Gehrig's disease. They could be used as therapy for burns or to regenerate skin and would help in developing new drugs*."
   b. If these cells were harvested in a way that did not involve the murder of a human life, then on what basis would it be wrong?
   c. Some may have once objected to organ transplants, blood transfusions, and the like – Properly harvested stem cells would be no different!

B. If you were to clone a person would they be a unique individual physically and spiritually?

1. First of all – A cloned person would have a unique soul make them a unique person:
   a. If you are alive you have a spirit, a soul **(James 2:26; Ecc. 12:7)**
   b. Nature has it's own version of cloning – Twins ➔ They both begin from one cell and share identical DNA ➔ Does only one of the twins have a soul
2. Even if scientists successfully clone a human, it is still God who gives that person life, breath, and being! Only God instill in them a soul! **(Acts 17:25, 28)**
3. Secondly, a cloned person would be physically a unique individual:
   a. Again, consider identical twins: Still differ even with 100% identical DNA!
   b. We are a lot more than just genes and DNA ➔ A clone would certainly look like its clonee; however, they would not act or think the same
   c. What if you cloned Adolph Hitler, Thomas Edison, or George Washington? They'd be different because they had different surroundings and life experiences!

III. Principles From God's Word Concerning These Issues:

A. It needs to be asked into what direction will these "advances" will take us!

1. Just because we can doesn't mean we should! **(Proverbs 14:15; 22:3)**
   a. **Illustration:** J. P.: The question is not can we, the question is should we?
   b. Considering the ramifications and implications – It is very unwise at best!
2. A couple of thought provoking questions deem answering:
   a. What person should be brought into this world as a mere experiment?
   b. If cloning is allowed – What will we do with all of the failures… the deformed and dysfunctional bad copies?
3. Cloning is an attempt to control and choose who will be born ➔ Are we playing God?
4. Cloning will inevitably result in exploited children:
   a. When pressed for the practical applications of cloning experts point to using them for "spare parts" for yourself or your child who becomes sick
   b. How long would it be before a child is cloned for its heart?
   c. Is it a proper reason to bring a child into this world for its parts? **(Psalms 127:3-5)**

B. Cloning and stem cell research is always sinful when an abortion is involved:

1. Cloning is a procedure that is very complicated that often does not work!
   a. Remember, to create Dolly there were 277 failed attempts! Cloning humans, a much more complicated procedure, would result in the same!
   b. **Quote:** "It took 277 trials and errors to produce Dolly the sheep, creating a cellular body count that would look like sheer carnage if the cells were human"

c. Therapeutic cloning is abortion! Bringing a life into existence in order to murder it and then reap its stem cells for medical research is abominable!
d. Because cloning is illegal in many places, scientists start the process, creating a new life, and somewhere along the way they abort it to avoid prosecution

2. Like with therapeutic cloning, embryotic stem cell research takes a life that is existing, but still developing, and aborts it only to use its cells to study and experiment!
3. Human life begins at conception, not at birth as some contend **(Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5)**
   a. Human embryos are distinct individuals, living members of the human species, just as you and I were at an earlier stage of our lives
   b. What is growing inside the womb is no different than a toddler, adolescent, or young adult ➔ Just because it hasn't fully matured doesn't make it less alive!
   c. To dissect these individuals for their "spare parts" and to try to involve all of us in this by public funding is grotesquely immoral!
4. The disregard for human life in accepting abortion has brought us to where we are!

C. God has given design and order for how life should be brought into this world and His ways must be followed and respected!

1. When God created the human race He gave an order in propagating life **(Gen 1:27-28)**
2. God is very clear on His family design: Fathers, mothers, and children! **(Eph. 6:1-4)**
   a. Children need parents – both a mother and father (sometimes tragedy prevents this from always being present, but it is God's design)
   b. If you are not in a marriage where that home can be provided, the hard truth is that God does not want you to have children!
   c. Who are some of the strongest advocates of cloning? The homosexual movement!
3. Cloning most be rejected if it is an attempt to circumvent God's order! **(I Tim. 5:14)**

CONCLUSION: Cloning and stem cell research is truly science's slippery slope! There is much good in medical research; however, when life is destroyed or God's ways neglected it must be rejected!