

# Redesigning the Created Human Being 4: Making Copies

by John David Mull and Justin Whitmore

## God and the Cloned Child

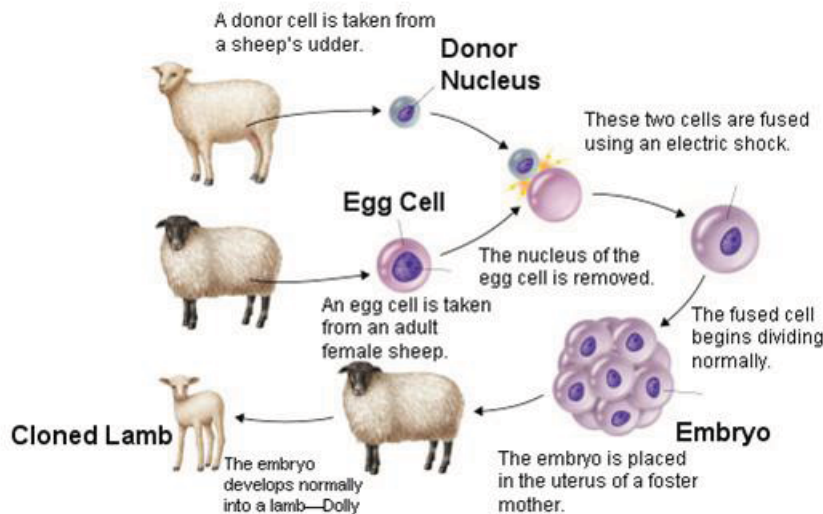
### Focus

To gain understanding of the human cloning process in light of science and the Biblical teaching of marriage and procreation. Is human cloning justified for those infertile couples who choose not to adopt, for the child that is created outside of their body will be either an identical twin of the father or the mother, depending on who is cloned. Cloning means making an identical genetic copy of another person without the use of male gametes. More on this later.

### Open with Prayer

### Getting Started

Pass out copies of the Lutherans for Life pamphlet "Cloning: Understanding the Basics". Study the pamphlet and review the cloning process in light of the diagram below so that all understand this asexual process (reproduction of a human with using sperm, male gametes). Study the following diagram that explains cloning. The process is the same for animals and human beings.



The donor and the cloned lamb are identical twins. This is cloning.

A few things to remember about cloning technology: (1) No male gametes (sperm) are needed; (2) the cell used in the above diagram is a cell taken from the underneath side of the sheep's belly. It is called a 'body or somatic cell'. It has, in humans, 46 chromosomes in the nucleus, including either an X (in a woman's body cell or a Y in a man's body cell). So, if a woman were cloned, you would use the body cell from a woman; and if a man were cloned you would use a skin cell from a man. Traditionally, the body cells used are skin cells located on the back of the leg calf.

Would a 'cloned child' be the son or daughter of a couple if they used this biotechnology to make a child? Discuss your answer in terms of Marriage and Parenting according to Section 2 and a biblical meaning of creation.

## Case Studies

### 1. What If...

One of the reasons given for cloning humans is extending one's life or the life of a loved one. For example, someone may want to make a clone when they are older so this copy can live on as their twin. Or, parents who have lost their child in a tragic accident would like to recreate their son using cloning...

Read Psalm 139:13-16

Why is the Psalmist praising God?

How does this pose a problem to the idea of cloning? It is God who is the one who creates, not us. God has not made us to be creators, but creatures. The Psalmist, therefore, praises God that God has given him life. He understands God to know what He is doing, and therefore praises God in His role as creator. Cloning ignores God's purposes for creating life and focuses on our own purposes. Instead of giving thanks to God for what God has done, we take on the role of creator. The arrogance of such a standpoint allows us to praise ourselves that our creating will be much better than what God has in store. Our wish, then, is for ourselves to be great and not God.

In light of this Bible study, what are your thoughts regarding the above situations? And, how would you feel if your parents would want to clone a child (remember, the child would be like your mother or father)?

### 2. The Greater Good

Why would someone want to clone a human for "the greater good?" Here are a couple of examples:

Using your 'cloned self' to harvest him/her for spare body parts in case you need a kidney, heart, or lungs later in your life. To accomplish this, your cloned embryo 'self' will be killed in order to harvest the cells from it that will grow the needed body parts.

To use your embryos cloned from your body so that you could donate them to science for research with the hope that scientists can develop treatments and cures for various diseases. Of course, this means killing your cloned brother or sister in their embryonic form to accomplish this end. Study the following Bible passages and questions.

Read Genesis 9:6 & Exodus 20:13.

What kind of clarity does God provide in these verses? Is there any sort of "gray" area on this issue? The text is pretty clear here. It says we should not murder and does not provide age parameters. You might make the point further by asking, what if the person is only 5 years old? a baby?... just before the child is born...

Perhaps Jesus provides some 'wiggle room' in the New Testament? Check out Matthew 15:19. What does Jesus call murder? He says that it is evil.

Read Romans 6:1-3

What do you think this passage has to say to those who would argue that it is okay to take the life of a cloned human in order to preserve the lives of those who have already been born? This text does not directly relate to our issue here, but it is speaking about doing something wrong for the "greater good..." sinning so that grace will increase. In this way, it does have something to say about the idea that we should consider taking human life in order to do research and/or extend the life of others. The answer is the same emphatic "By no means!"

What do you think are some reasons people might make this “greater good” argument? Do you think it is valid? Do the ends (possible treatment and cure of diseases) justify the means (the creation of a cloned human being to kill him/her to reach the ‘ends’)?

### **In Christ**

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11.

According to this passage, where do you think our ultimate hope is found?

What do you think this passage has to say about all you’ve learned about cloning?

We see here that our ultimate hope is in Christ. It is by His death and resurrection that we are assured that God will restore us on the last day. Any trust in cloning to bring hope to us ignores Christ’s sacrifice. It disallows us humility. It forces us to cast our anxieties on something other than Him. Thanks be to God that He has called us not to be of ourselves, but to be of Him, created for the glory that is found only in Him. So as we consider the idea of cloning, then, we must consider it in the context of God who created each of us, and loves us, even to the point of dying that we may be His.

### **Closing Prayer**