

Chapter 14

LIFE BEFORE BIRTH

OVERVIEW: The abortion blight and the subsequent trend toward using aborted babies in research stems from an ignorance and/or disrespect for God’s Word and an ignorance of the marvel of human life in the prenatal state. Here, you will be (re)introduced to some aspects of prenatal human development and methods of prenatal genetic testing as a preliminary to a later study of the related bioethical issues.

BLUEPRINT: Read Chapter 14, pages 307-313 to gain familiarity with development of the unborn child. Visit some of the INTERNET sites (see below) for further insights into life before birth and the methods of contraception and prenatal genetic testing.

VOCABULARY:

zygote	abortion methods
implantation	prenatal testing
embryo	amniocentesis
placenta	chorionic villus sampling (CVS)

LEARNING GOALS:

1. From strictly a biological standpoint, why is it difficult to specify when an individual human life begins?
2. Considering the information in your text, Table 14-3, what bodily structures and functions are being destroyed if an abortion occurs even at 35 days after conception?
3. Distinguish conception control from birth control. Why is (isn't) this distinction important? Which if any *means* of "birth control" unacceptable in your opinion?
4. What is your position with respect to prenatal testing? Explain your rationale.

INTERNET: Visit the “BIO 100 Web Links” Page for Assignment # 26 for web links on the following:

Contraception Methods	Genetic Abnormalities
Prenatal Testing	Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity

LECTURE EMPHASIS will be upon the following topics:

1. Development of the human from conception to birth
2. Methods of prenatal genetic testing
3. Ethical considerations related to contraception and prenatal testing

CONCEPTION CONTROL and BIRTH CONTROL

A. CONCEPTION CONTROL (Pre-Conception): See "Contraception Methods" Web Site

1. ABSTINENCE -- Mutually agreed; Self-control
2. MECHANICAL METHOD -- CONDOMS (15% failure for married couples)
3. COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES -- risk of endangering embryo/baby (see B.)

B. BIRTH CONTROL (Post Conception)

1. "THE PILL" -- MAINTAINS HIGH SYNTHETIC ESTROGEN + PROGESTERONE
-- SUPPRESSES FSH and LH --> NO OVULATION
-- MAY RENDER UTERUS INHOSPITABLE
2. *NORPLANT* -- SKIN IMPLANTS RELEASE SYNTHETIC PROGESTERONE
3. RU-486 -- INHIBITS PROGESTERONE SUPPLY
-- ABORTION OF EMBRYO/FETUS + ENDOMETRIUM
4. "MORNING-AFTER PILL" -- PREVENTS IMPLANTATION
-- PRESCRIBED TO RAPE VICTIMS