



## **What Does the Bible Say... About the Beginning of Life?**

**Whether one talks about pregnancy, abortion, embryonic stem cell research, in vitro fertilization or miscarriage, one question becomes pivotal, "When does life begin?"**

Because the question regarding the beginning of life is generally rooted in biological concerns we are inclined to first look for a biological answer. Instead, we find a different perspective from God's Word.

The Bible is the account of man's relationship with God. It is the story of perfect beginnings in the Garden of Eden and disastrous results in disobedience to God. From that point forward the imperfect state of men and women eternally separated them from God.

God, however, provided a unique solution. *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Because there was no purity in us sinners God sent His Son, Jesus, as a substitute. He paid the price for sinfulness, and God accepted what Jesus did as payment for our sins. Our sins did not disappear. Our sinfulness continues to wreak havoc in our society, our families and our personal lives. Jesus, however, became the perfect payment for our sinfulness and removed their eternal consequences.

One portion of Scripture tells us that *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23), and in another part Jesus describes the eternity for those who refuse to renounce sin and confess Jesus as their Savior. On Judgment Day He would tell them: *"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 25:41).

There is nothing worse in all existence than being found guilty of sin before the perfect God. It is worse than any temporal human suffering. It is worse than man's most terrible of tortures. It is worse than any contemporary injustice or tragedy. Being guilty of sin without a Savior has consequences that never end – and they are endlessly harsh!

Understanding that context helps us to answer the question about when life begins. We read in Psalm 51:5: *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."* Life at conception is much more than a blob of tissue, a "part" of a woman's body or developing flesh with potential. At conception there is already an accountability for sin.

It is biology, therefore, that helps us understand the more intricate details. When sperm and egg meet a new life begins. Genetically each life inherits characteristics from the parents but all human life is uniquely individual and already accountable to God. If left undisturbed it grows, matures, exits the womb, grows and matures, exits the home, grows and matures and eventually exits this life. After fertilization the only things that change are maturity and location.

Biology indeed supports the Biblical truth that at conception – that is, when the sperm fertilizes the egg – life begins. That Biblical truth then guides us in how we look at beginning-of-life questions that challenge us today. 🌸





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# Our Baby's Life Begins



**Day 1:** Today your life began. The egg from your mother was fertilized by the father's sperm within one of your mother's two fallopian tubes. You received 23 chromosomes from each parent. You are unique and individual.

**Days 5-9:** From the moment of fertilization you have been growing as you journey down the fallopian tube. Meanwhile the uterine lining has been preparing for your arrival and your implant.

**Days 10-14:** Your mother may not know you are there yet, but her body is receiving the signals. Her menstrual cycle will halt and her body will begin changing internally and externally to focus on providing you with nourishment and preparing for your eventual delivery.

**Day 21:** Your mother's normal menstrual cycle is now about one week late. Your mom and dad begin to wonder if you are in there. Indeed you are. Your little heart has already started beating, and the basics of your nervous system are established.

**Day 30:** You are now one month old. If we could see you we would notice that your arms, legs, eyes and ears and some muscles are starting to form.



**Day 35:** You have five fingers on each hand – ready to hold a football or play the piano. Your heart is busy pumping and, as incredible as it sounds, your blood type can actually be different than your mother's. The developing placenta keeps your blood from mixing which protects your life and her life.

**Day 40:** We don't know what you are thinking, but brain waves can be measured.

**Week 7:** Your liver is working, and you begin to move spontaneously. Your jaw is not only forming, but you have the buds of your first teeth.

**Week 8:** A lot has been happening, and you are now a little more than an inch long. Your stomach is starting to produce digestive juices and your kidneys are beginning to function. Although your mother still cannot feel your movement, you are becoming sensitive to touch.

**Week 9:** We don't expect you to be a criminal, but you already have fingerprints.

**Week 10:** You can now swallow. You can even squint and wrinkle your forehead.

**Week 11:** You have grown another inch in less than three weeks. You have grown fast, and your face is already beginning to look like the little baby we will see at birth.

**Week 12:** You are having sleep cycles. You can move your head and curl your toes.



## Week 13

You are beginning to grow hair already, and it looks like we can tell if you are a boy or a girl.



**Month 4:** You have really been growing. You are eight to ten inches long and already weigh at least a half a pound. We can see from your mother's belly the proof that you are now in there. Your ears have started to work and will continue to work better – until you are a teenager (just kidding!).

**Month 5:** You are halfway here. You are 12 inches long, and your hearing has gotten good enough that you start to recognize your mother's voice. You even startle at sudden sounds around you.

**Month 6:** It is still too early but in an emergency many children your age have been able to live outside the womb. We prefer you continue to grow.

**Month 7:** You are getting stronger and larger, and your senses are becoming more developed.

**Month 8:** Your body is developing important antibodies. Your skin is also firming up and preparing for life outside of the womb.

**Month 9:** It has been between 266 and 294 days since your life began. We are anxious to hold you, and you must be anxious for birth. You are now six to nine pounds and between 19 and 21 inches long. It's beginning to get pretty tight in there.

**Birth Date:** Today we met for the first time. You look great! 🧡

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# TRUE TO LIFE:

*A life curriculum for Christian schools*



## Learning from a Lima Bean

### Materials:

- ✓ Lima beans
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Toothpicks
- ✓ OPTIONAL: Magnifying glasses
- ✓ Jar or bowl

You will need at least one lima bean and a toothpick for each child or group. (A magnifying glass would also be helpful.)

- Soak lima beans in a jar of water overnight.
- Give children a paper towel to work on.
- Give each child a lima bean.
- Use the toothpick to peel off the outer skin of the bean. Inside the lima bean should be a tiny plant called an embryo.
- Have the children find the embryo in their bean.

Remind them that this embryo could not be viewed from the outside of the bean, yet it was alive and growing inside the bean preparing for its continued life beyond its current home. The embryo is sheltered inside the bean and lives off the food stored inside the two halves of the bean. Compare this to living in the womb. The baby is alive and growing inside the womb before he or she is born. That is how God prepares the baby for life outside the womb. Inside the mother's womb, the baby is protected and supported by the mother's body. The watery womb protects the baby just as the bean protects the embryo. The mother feeds the baby through the umbilical cord a little like the bean gives the embryo food that is stored inside the bean. God's plan is that the tiny baby is supported by the mother's body while he or she is so young until the baby is strong enough to live outside the womb. Mothers and fathers then protect the baby after he or she is born.



# Recipes

Each *Parish Edition* of *Clearly Caring* will contain favorite recipes to be enjoyed by everyone.

## **POPPY SEED CRANBERRY SALAD**

3 cups mixed spring greens

1 cup iceberg lettuce (torn into bit-size pieces)

½-1 cup dried cranberries

½-1 cup cashews

1 cup (4 oz.) shredded Swiss cheese

1-2 Granny Smith apples (unpeeled), thinly sliced

Poppy seed dressing to taste (or use homemade dressing below)

In large bowl, toss all ingredients except dressing. Drizzle with desired amount of dressing just before serving.

OPTION: Add a cored and cubed medium pear, if desired.

## **HOMEMADE POPPY SEED DRESSING**

½ cup sugar

1/3 cup cider or red wine vinegar

2 T. lemon juice

2 T. finely chopped onion

½ tsp. salt

2/3 cup vegetable oil

2-3 tsps. poppy seeds

Whisk all the ingredients until well blended.