

Current Events and Children
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The dubious events surrounding Mark Foley's resignation from Congress have been quite prominent in the news recently. When my sons and I are eating lunch, I will often ask them if they want to see what is going on in the world, and they usually say 'Yes'. This is particularly noteworthy because they are 2 ½ and 4 years old. However, I screen the news and will turn it off if there is something unsuitable for their little minds. I like it when they remind me of the news and turn the question back to me. "Dad, should we see what's going on in the world?"

This nice routine skirts a troublesome line. I want my children to know and care about the events in the world. I would like them to be aware of Darfur, Iraq, North Korea, and other prominent places in the news. But I don't want to shatter the image that they have of safety, even if safety is somewhat relative.

We live in a complex world. There are atrocities around the globe and there is definitely systemic oppression in America and abroad, but the news about former-Congressman Foley's unhealthy penchant for sending Capital pages dirty messages is sickening. It is even worse if someone knew about Foley's problem and did not try to help him. The first step in helping this man, who (just like you and me) is made in the image of God (*imago Dei*), is to remove him from his place of opportunity (having access to Capital pages) and temptation.

My intent would not be to have his employment terminated and forget about him. I think the most fruitful approach would be to seek healing. If I were Speaker Hastert, I would take Foley to a psychiatric hospital and get him help for his pedophilia. He should not be cast aside or allowed to mask his predilection for children by blaming his behavior on alcoholism. When abused, alcohol can lead to many terrible outcomes, but there is no scientific evidence for alcohol causing someone to become a pedophile.

I am disgusted by the thoughts and actions of pedophiles. But then I wonder about Foley as a person. He is created in God's image. How can I cherish all life and cast aside someone who acts in the way he is accused of acting? The answer is: I can't. He needs help.

This brings me back to children and the news. I am 33 years old. I do not pretend that my young sons have the same mental capacity or maturity that I do. They should not know about pedophiles at their age. The most they need to know about sexual predators is what my older son's pediatrician told him at his last visit. She said, "If anyone touches you here [pointing his private area] or in any way that makes you uncomfortable, tell your mom or dad."

I will continue watching the news with my boys. I will continue to shelter them. I will continue to challenge them to expand their world view. And, because of people like Foley who need help and have not yet received it, I will walk the fine line. In all of this, I will continue praying for my boys, the world, and, yes, even for Mark Foley.