



part 7 — *Under Cover of Fog*

Touching Up Our Picture of Health

by *Risë Rafferty*

It was May 1940. Nazi troops had invaded France and cornered nearly 400,000 Allied soldiers into a narrow beachhead around Dunkirk. To all appearances the British and French troops were doomed. Miraculously, the German armies waited around the perimeter of Dunkirk and did not immediately attack, giving time to plan a rescue. Britain called for the aid of navy and privately owned vessels. Hundreds of ships of all sizes and descriptions attempted the rescue across the English Channel. Only 30,000 troops were expected to evade capture; in reality over 300,000—a third of a million men—were rescued. Winston Churchill called it, “a miracle of deliverance.” It was reported that for *seven* days the seas remained calm. While one week earlier the channel had been unnavigable, the troops were ferried across a near-glassy sea. It is said that fog also played a vital role in saving lives as it blanketed the English Channel in a robe of protection from the Luftwaffe, the German Air Force units assigned to bombard Dunkirk. The fog reportedly lasted seven days.

While I believe God used fog in this historical account to save lives and accomplish His purposes, I also believe Satan is seeking to use fog to enshroud our minds for the purpose of defeating us in our spiritual battles. The following is a list of modes that Satan capitalizes on toward this end:

1. stress
 2. toxic thoughts
 3. emotional wounds
 4. intemperance (living out of harmony with nature and the natural functions of our body)
 5. overly saturated senses
- Brain nerve cell growth and obstruction are formed not only by conscious choice, as we learned last month, but also by experiences over

which we may have no control. In this article, we will explore how emotional wounds can impair total health, weaken the will, and affect spiritual freedom.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) was conducted over a period of several years charting detailed evaluations of over 50,000 adult Kaiser Foundation Health Plan members in San Diego.

The study was triggered by physicians’ observations of obese individuals dropping out of obesity programs. Many of those dropouts, however, were the ones who were successfully losing weight. The physicians’ investigations concluded that obesity was not the individuals’ problem. Obesity “was their protective solution to problems that previously had never been discussed with anyone. . . . Overall we found the simultaneous presence of opposing forces to be common; many . . . were driving with one foot on the brakes and one on the gas.”

The ACE study came into being to discover just how extensive this phenomenon was in those with health concerns. The current adult health status of participants was compared in eight categories of adverse childhood experience that had frequently been identified in the weight program. These categories follow:

Three categories pertained to personal abuse:

1. recurrent physical abuse
2. recurrent emotional abuse
3. recurrent sexual abuse

Four categories pertained to growing up in homes where these dysfunctions were present:

4. alcoholism or drug use
5. incarceration of a family member
6. chronic depression, mental illness or suicide ideation
7. violence toward the mother
8. divorce, separation of parents, or a parent

in some way lost to the patient during childhood

A person not exposed to any of these categories in childhood had an ACE score of 0. An individual exposed to any 6, for example, had an ACE score of 6, and so on. The average age of study participants was 57 years old. The researchers then measured the effects of childhood experiences on adult health status.

Adverse childhood experiences were found to be more common than previously recognized or acknowledged. "Of equal importance was our observation that they had a powerful correlation to adult health a half-century later." Vincent Felitti, M.D., who wrote the report, commented, "How will these childhood experiences play out decades later in a doctor's office? How does one perform reverse alchemy, going from a normal newborn with almost unlimited potential to a diseased, depressed adult?"

Here is a peek at how they play out. The higher the ACE score, the greater the likelihood of current smoking. A person with a mid-range ACE score of 4 was 390% more likely to have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (associated with smoking) than a person with an ACE score of 0.

Depression had a strong relationship with ACE scores. An ACE score greater than 4 was associated with a 460% rise in depression compared to an individual with an ACE score of 0. A "1220% historical increase in attempted suicide" was also seen between these two groups. Relationships were found between ACE scores and heart disease, diabetes, obesity, alcoholism, and even job performance.

In spite of the risk of AIDS and efforts made to restrain its use, IV drug use is still a major problem in America. The physicians found that "IV drug use may properly be viewed as a personal solution to problems that are well concealed by social niceties and convention." In a male child with an ACE score of 6, there was seen a 4600% increase in the likelihood of later using intravenous drugs.

The study's dramatic findings led the researchers to these intriguing questions: ". . . Might heroin then be used for relief of profound anguish dating back to childhood experiences? Might it be the best coping device a person can

find? Is drug abuse self-destructive, or is it a desperate attempt at self-healing, albeit at a significant future risk? This point is important because primary prevention is far more difficult than anticipated—possibly because incomplete understanding of the benefits of so-called health risk behaviors causes these behaviors to be viewed as irrational acts that have only negative consequences. Does this incomplete view of drug abuse leave us mouthing cautionary platitudes instead of understanding the cause of our intractable public health problems?"

How often have we mouthed "cautionary platitudes" instead of getting our hands dirty at the heart of the issue. Through damaging life experiences, Satan has cast his blanket of fog over our spiritual eyes to prevent us from seeing the truth of God and our incredible value to Him. Trapped in self-destructive habits, we become incapable of focusing on the voice of God.

My favorite part of the story of Dunkirk is the part you don't often hear. A band of prayer warriors in Wales interceded on behalf of those men on Dunkirk. They fasted and prayed every night for hours seeking God's intervention. I believe it was prayer that saved the Allied troops at Dunkirk. God answers prayer. You may feel that you are a prisoner to the effects of damaging childhood experiences. It was not your fault or God's desire that you experience any of the eight categories mentioned in the ACE study. God wants to set you free from whatever self-destructive coping device you have used all these years. But there is a war to be fought. The enemy will not let you go without a fight. So put on the armor of God found in Ephesians 6 without neglecting verse 18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . ." It is prayer that today will make a way of escape from the fog surrounding our souls.

All quotes taken from:

"The Relation Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adult Health: Turning Gold into Lead," by Vincent J. Felitti, MD, *The Permanente Journal*, Winter 2002, Volume 6, No. 1.

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