

SuperGlue Babies of the 21st Century

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By Frank Deutsch

"The right thing to do is to quit eating meat or drinking wine or doing anything else that offends your brother or makes him sin" (Rom. 14:21, LVB).

"...then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away...Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless (Mk. 4:17,19, AMP)

One story I laughed at and enjoyed as a child was "The Wonderful Tar Baby," published in 1880, by Joel Chandler Harris. The fable, narrated by "Uncle Remus," relates the story of Brother Fox, who spent his life trying to catch Brother Rabbit, and Brother Rabbit, who was very proud of his ability to elude the much larger Brother Fox. But Brother Fox was clever, and figured out a way to capture Brother Rabbit, targeting Brother Rabbit's obvious pride in himself. Brother Fox got some tar and made a dummy out of it, a "tar baby," and set it on the side of the road where Brother Rabbit always roamed.

Brother Fox then hid to wait on Brother Rabbit's arrival and watch the plan unfold. "He had scarcely gotten comfortable (as comfortable as one can get in a ditch), before Brother Rabbit came strutting along like he owned the world and was collecting rent from everybody in it." Brother Rabbit cruised by and said "Good morning!" to the tar baby, but the tar baby didn't answer him a word. This offended Brother Rabbit, and he stopped and addressed the tar baby once again.

"I said good morning!" he said loudly. But the tar baby, which had no life in it, didn't answer, and Brother Fox watched from the ditch. Then Brother Rabbit began to get really angry and offended. "If your parents didn't teach you no manners, I reckon I'll teach you some!" he screamed, and hauled off and hit that tar baby. And his paw got stuck in the tar. "You let me go!" Brother Rabbit yelled. "Let me go or I'll really pop you one. All right! I warned you!" And he smacked the tar baby on the other side of its head. Now his other paw was stuck. Then Brother Rabbit started to kick that tar baby. Soon he had all four paws stuck in the tar. By now he was so angry that he head-butted the tar baby, and his head too got stuck in the tar.

"Well, I got you now," Brother Fox said when he was able to catch his breath from laughing. "I guess you ain't going to be going around through this community raising commotion anymore. It's all your fault too. You stuck yourself on that tar baby without so much as an invitation."

As many of you may not be familiar with tar and its properties, let's bring the story into the 21st century and rechristen the "tar baby" as the "Super Glue baby". As most everyone knows, Super Glue is colorless, odorless, and bonds instantly. Virtually all of

us have been stuck up with Super Glue at one point or another and it releases only by use of a strong solvent.

This story contains great insight and relevance for Christians in the twenty-first century. Often we get all stuck up in the spiritual "Super Glue babies" Satan throws in our paths to distract us from God's plans and purposes for our lives. We involve ourselves in "sticky situations" that are none of our business, get angry and offended, and stumble in our walk with God.

Super Glue babies require an **element of offense** in order to cause the intended stumbling and distraction in our Christian walk. If we refuse to become offended, Super Glue babies will be harmless against us. The Bible says that believers can immunize themselves against these stumblings, distractions, and offenses. "Great peace have they who love Your law; nothing shall offend them or make them stumble" (Ps. 119:165, AMP). Knowing and walking in the word and will of God will keep us from getting "all stuck up" in distractions designed to frustrate us and uselessly occupy our time and energy.

Jesus is our perfect example. Remember the story of the woman at the well nearly two thousand years ago in Samaria? When confronted with her sin, she attempted to distract Jesus. By supernatural word of knowledge, Jesus had told the woman whom he had just met, "For you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now." The woman avoided this prophetic word addressing her sin by saying "But say, tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here [at Mount Gerizim], where our ancestors worshiped?" (Jn. 4:18-20, LVB). The woman knew she had encountered a prophet (v.19). However, she surely did not want godly advice from him regarding the men in her life, her real issue. No, she wanted to avoid that, so she threw out a sticky diversion, a religious argument, a distraction to get Jesus off the subject of her live-in boyfriend. She hoped she would get Jesus into a religious argument and he would forget about husbands and boyfriends, and not inquire of God further about her lifestyle. Observe how this outcome would leave the woman in the same spiritual condition as when God sent Jesus to her for salvation.

However, Jesus didn't fall for it. He did not become offended or distracted. Neither did He offend her by condemning her. He just truthfully told her who He was. Because He spoke the truth in love and demonstrated it with supernatural power, she believed Him and became the first evangelist recorded in the Bible. The whole city came to Jesus because of her testimony! (Jn. 4:21-23).

Many believers continually slap at Super Glue babies, or the Bible wouldn't have to advise so many times against it. "There's no use arguing with a fool. He only rages and scoffs, and tempers flare" (Prov. 29:9, LVB). I liken it to a handsome, well-dressed man walking through beautiful Beverly Hills. The palm trees are perfect, the lawns and gardens perfectly manicured, and the sidewalks immaculate, except for one thing. A wealthy person's poodle made a mess on the sidewalk in front of his beautiful home, and its handler didn't clean it up. He has a choice. He can just walk around it. "A prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them..." Or, he can get offended and kick that mess off the sidewalk, soiling his Gucci loafers and Armani suit in the process, just to slap that Super Glue baby. "...the simpleton goes blindly on (walk right into the mess even though they see it) and suffers the consequences" (Prov. 22:3, LVB). Moreover, we can rarely kick those Super Glue babies without having some of the mess stick to us! "Do not answer fools according to their folly, or you will be a fool yourself" (Prov. 26:4, NRSV). The stain and odor of it will stick to us and let everyone know how foolish we have been.

Scripture further defines the effects of our improper response to such distractions. In Jude 23 (KJV), God is described as "...hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." By flesh, the Bible is referring to works of the flesh, which are any works, even good works that God did not direct us to do. Jesus said, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh (works of the flesh) counts for nothing" (John 6:63, NIV). Works of the flesh, even seemingly

good works that God did not order, can become unprofitable, dirty, and smelly in the sight of God. "...all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) is like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away [far from God's favor, hurrying us toward destruction]" (Is. 64:6, AMP). "Dead flies will cause even a bottle of perfume to stink! Yes, a small mistake can outweigh much wisdom and honor" (Eccl. 10:1, LVB). This also applies to relationships not ordered by God. The sticky mess from relationships we shouldn't be having and the activities we shouldn't be doing spots our clean garment of salvation, puts a spiritual blot and stink on everything we do, and keeps us away from God's best plan for us.

Jesus refused to react to or be distracted by the devil's sticky tricks because He was always and solely led by his Father's word and will, as expressed to Him by the Holy Spirit (John 6:38, 12:49). When Lazarus grew sick and died, Jesus didn't immediately rush to aid him, even though the family of Lazarus asked him to do exactly that. Timing, in many situations, can mean everything. If Jesus had left sooner, He could have gotten stuck up in an angry mob that had already tried to stone him. Then, He would have missed His divine appointment at Calvary to die for mankind according to prophecy. Most of us would run to Lazarus immediately after receiving such a message, without taking time to pray and hear the divine wisdom and direction of the Father. Jesus, however, waited until the "light of the Holy Spirit" showed Him when to go and what to do when He got there. By waiting and hearing from the Holy Spirit first, He traveled and did miraculous work in complete safety, avoiding the mob that sought to kill him and thwart God's perfect plan and timing. (John 11:1-15). Then God used Jesus to raise Lazarus, giving glory to the Father and joy to Mary and Martha.

Satan tempted Paul with sticky distractions, but he refused to slap uselessly at them. Paul knew his true focus was to take the gospel to the Gentiles, and to keep his own mind and body under the control of his reborn spirit so he could complete the work (Acts 26:16-18). "So I do not run without a goal. I fight like a boxer who is hitting something – not just the air. I treat my body hard and make it my slave so that I myself will not be disqualified after I have preached to others" (1Cor. 9:26-27, NCV). When necessary, Paul could use a distraction, knowing that "A divided kingdom ends in ruin. A city or home divided against itself cannot stand (Mt. 12:25, LVB).

When people sought to trouble Paul, telling him that others did more water baptism, and some used different forms for those services, Paul replied, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1Cor. 1:17, KJV). When others troubled him by criticizing how and where he ministered, he replied, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!...I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel..." (1Cor. 9:16,22-23, NIV). **Paul stayed focused** on "the Father's business," and refused to be offended or distracted from it by religious Super Glue babies and works of the flesh that God did not direct him to do. John the Baptist refused to be diverted when certain men came to offend him, saying that Jesus' meetings were drawing larger crowds than his. John simply replied, "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30, NIV). All of these men refused to accept the invitation to be offended and stumble in their ministries, talk badly about other ministers, or leave the church.

It is important for Christians to be able to "separate the clean from the unclean" (see Eze. 22:26, 2Cor. 6:17), "the works of the Spirit from the works of the flesh" (which are Super Glue babies) (Rom. 8:4-8). Jesus said that the works of the flesh "...choke the word and it becomes unfruitful." He went on to say that the word of God, attentively heard by a receptive human spirit, will "...bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred." (Mark 4:19-20, KJV). What kind of fruit are we yielding? Whether we bring forth thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold (God's good, acceptable, or perfect will) (Rom. 12:2), to a large extent, depends on how often we get offended and detour off God's path to slap at Satan's spiritual Super Glue babies. Distracting Super Glue babies and works of the flesh will drain our time and energy that God has provided for us to bring glory to His kingdom.

However, in certain cases, knowledge of such distractions and how people react to

them can actually work to our advantage. God delivered Paul from a mob by giving him supernatural wisdom to focus the mob's attention elsewhere. "Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, 'My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.' When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously...The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid they would tear Paul to pieces. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks" (Acts 23:6-10, NIV). God gave Paul a lifeless Super Glue baby (in this case, a difference in religious doctrine) to offer the mob in place of himself, and the mob chose to take the bait. "A wise king scattereth the wicked..." (Prov. 20:26, WEB).

A MODERN DAY EXAMPLE

God once used the same tactic to deliver me. I was in a legal battle, being sued by a number of banks and insurance companies. I was being deposed (questioned by attorneys under oath), so that anything I said could and would be used against me. People who saw us thought I had a dream team of attorneys to help me. The truth is, my enemies were paying for those high-priced attorneys who were there to crucify me if they could. As they were being paid by the hour, it promised to be a long deposition, until God intervened in answer to my prayers. "...For I will give you the right words and such logic that none of your opponents will be able to reply!" (Lk. 21:15, LVB).

When one attorney started to question me about people I knew in high school (thirty years before any of the acts under discussion took place), I didn't want to answer the questions. I knew they would investigate any person whose name I gave them. I did not desire to bring this harassment and invasion of privacy into the lives of my childhood friends (most of whom I had not seen in decades). There was no reason for the attorneys to pursue this line of questioning except to inflate their billings and cause unnecessary embarrassment and discomfort of others and myself. Nevertheless, the law in this specific situation said they could ask any question they wished. Then God intervened by bringing to mind a scripture, "For by your words you will be justified *and* acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned *and* sentenced" (Mt. 12:37, AMP). It seemed to me that the attorney who was questioning me had tripped himself up with his own opening remarks.

I said, "Can I ask the court reporter to read back counsel's opening remarks?"

She smiled, and read from her record. "We welcome Mr. Deutsch here today, and we thank him for his cooperation in giving us information regarding this case..."

I interrupted her. "Since these questions concerning my high school friends have nothing to do with the case or the matter at hand, I refuse to answer them."

There was a momentary shock of silence around the conference table. The Super Glue baby of distraction and offense had been placed on the table. Would they strike the bait?

Then the lawyer asking the questions turned to my attorney and said, "He will answer my questions. I have every right to ask these questions."

From the other end of the table, another lawyer immediately responded, "He's here trying to help us. Why don't you shut up and let him?" Then the other attorneys began to argue, hitting that Super Glue baby. Finally, the lawyer who asked the original question raged, "I have this document..." waving it over his head.

My lawyer stood up and interrupted, "Document? What document? My client is

involved in a Federal case, and, as an officer of the court, I demand that you immediately turn that document over to the United States Attorney for this district."

"It's my document, and I won't give it to anybody," snarled the first attorney.

Then all the attorneys proceeded to argue among themselves, hitting that Super Glue baby again and again, until everyone of them got stuck up in it and forgot about me! My attorney was giggling and trying to hide behind a magazine as the argument raged on. He whispered to me behind the magazine, "This deposition is over." He was right. I never had to answer another question, never! Those lawyers had been paid to fight with someone, and, by the grace of God, it was a lifeless Super Glue baby, and not me or my friends from thirty years ago.

When I taught this lesson in a Bible study class, one person became uncomfortable when I discussed works of the flesh. Guess what he did? He threw out a Super Glue baby, saying, "You know the (woman) pastor gave a great message last week, but she really can't be a pastor, because nowhere in the Bible does it say a woman is supposed to be a pastor."

I was shocked. Nobody said anything about women or pastors. Where did that come from? Aha! A Super Glue baby designed to keep us away from the real issue, his works of the flesh. The Spirit of God had convicted him.

God gave me a response for him that would bless him without offending him. I told him a testimony about my father-in-law, who used to have rheumatoid arthritis and could barely walk. He went to a meeting held by a well-known husband and wife ministry team who were teaching and preaching at the Anaheim Convention Center. It was so crowded that he couldn't get in. As he was leaving, someone, or an angel as he said, opened an exit gate and pulled him inside on to the convention floor. The pastor's wife walked by, about twenty feet from him, and the power of God came upon him. He fell down on the floor under the power of the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 18:6). He rose up, healed, and has been fine ever since. "Now what would you tell my father-in-law," I asked the man, "to convince him that this woman was not anointed by God to preach the gospel of healing?"

He was speechless. We should be able, by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, to recognize Super Glue babies - phony issues and works of the flesh - and avoid pursuing them or being offended by them. "Be humble when you are trying to teach those who are mixed up concerning the truth. For if you talk meekly and courteously to them they are more likely, with God's help, to turn away from their wrong ideas and believe what is true" (2nd Ti. 2:25, LVB). We will be far more fruitful and "...acceptable to God and approved of men" (Rom. 14:18, RSV) for having avoided the temptation to slap that lifeless Super Glue baby. Let us pray:

Father, in the name of Jesus, please help us to hear you and obey you. Please make our path plain. Help us to discern your will accurately, so we walk in the path you prepared for us before we were born, and receive every blessing you planned for us. Let us see and avoid every work and distraction that is not from you, in Jesus' name. (Eph. 2:10, Ps. 139:15-16, 2Ti. 1:9, Jer. 29:11)

WORKS CONSULTED

1. "Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby." The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit. Told by Julius Lester. N.Y.: Puffin Books, 1987. 10-14.
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