

1

The other day I heard someone say, “My wife asked me to pass her the lipstick this morning, but I passed a tube of Super Glue by mistake...She still isn’t talking to me.”

On a more serious note: What has a dark side, a light side, and holds the universe together? If you’re a *Star Wars* fan you might suggest The Force, but everyone knows the real answer is duct tape.

It seems like something is always falling apart, and if I need to fix something, the first things I think about are super glue and duct tape, though now we also have Gorilla glue and tape. We humans have been figuring how to glue things together for a long time. Over 200,000 years ago, birch bark tar was used to glue stone flakes to wood, and in South Africa 70,000 years ago, someone created a compound glue by combining a reddish clay pigment with plant gum.¹ It appears things have been falling apart for a very long time and we have tried to hold things together.

Many have also wondered what holds the universe together—why we don’t float away off the earth and why planets don’t hurl into space. Scientists suggest

that after the Big Bang of the universe over 13 billion years ago, four basic forces formed in the early few seconds to bind everything together: gravity, the strong force, the weak force, and electromagnetic force.

Although the Letter to the Colossians doesn’t mention gravity or even Super Glue, the writer was also concerned about how things were held together. The author suggested that in the vastness of the universe, an unseen force, an invisible God, holds all things together. Both scientists and the letter to the Colossians recognize that something holds everything together, even better than duct tape.

Although we don’t know the exact reason Paul wrote this letter to the church in Colossae, he offered a big picture of the cosmos, striving to offer reassurance in the midst of multiple voices trying to tear apart the church. Located in our modern-day Turkey, the city of Colossae had citizens from many parts of the world. Being a cosmopolitan community, diverse cultures and religious beliefs mixed together, offering a variety of ideas and philosophies.

While we know that diversity can bring richness and enhance a community, the early church seemed to be confused with so many conflicting ideas. Paul wrote a letter to encourage them to see the bigger picture, to not get bogged down in all the various details.

He suggested that it's through Christ that we have come to experience the basic glue of life, the force that binds us together. Later in the letter Paul warned his readers not to worry about which religious festivals or foods are correct, which beliefs or practices are right, for in the bigger picture, Christ holds us all together. He suggested this force was the firstborn of creation, before anything else was created, who offers reconciliation and peace, whether on heaven or earth.

Yes, we may have differences in beliefs. We may differ in our political views. We may even disagree on the best glue to fix something broken. But in the bigger picture, God holds us together, regardless of our differences.

Near the beginning of his letter, Paul offered a blessing to the church: "May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from God's glorious power, so that you may have endurance and patience." This blessing reminded the church that their strength comes from God, for God is the glue that holds us together, even in the most difficult of times. Think of the struggles you have faced in your life. Looking back you may wonder how you ever got through them. It's often in hindsight that we sometimes recognize how we held it all together—through God Glue, the Sticky Spirit. When life seems to fall apart, we may experience that invisible force, that strength that gets us through the troubling times.

Glues are often made up of different substances that dry together to create a stronger bond, and Paul hinted at an element that makes God Glue even stronger—"joyfully giving thanks to God."

One young mother in Michigan discovered how gratitude could serve as the glue in her family. She wrote:

A couple of months ago, my husband made a statement that's since resonated with me. On a

3

particularly hectic day, he said, “You’re the glue that keeps this family together.”

I thought carefully about this statement, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized what a compliment it was. Glue is messy, sticky, and sometimes doesn’t work as expected. Glue also carries the power to bond that which might not otherwise come together. Glue works quietly and swiftly in the background without much recognition. Glue comes through in a pinch when we need it the most.

She then created a list of gratitude—from her husband and children to things she remembered to do that day. She wrote:

Being the glue means keeping track of which little one is boycotting bananas this week and what they might enjoy instead. It’s keeping a mental note of that missing mitten lying on the porch chair and despite not remembering what you did two days ago, knowing where to find it. Being the glue means remembering to send that birthday card out and that you need to buy goodies for the school party...I’m far from the perfect Wife, Mom, Daughter, or Friend. Nor do I aim to be. But I will

continue to be the glue and will be grateful for the ability to do all that comes with it.²

Have you ever thought of yourself as the glue that holds your family together? That may feel like a huge responsibility, especially since so many sticky situations occur in our lives. Sometimes when I glue things together, I use a bit too much glue, and it oozes out the side, creating a mess on the floor. Sometimes I may not use enough and the glued objects fall apart again. Being glue by ourselves may be messy and may not always work, but it’s God Glue that holds us together even when we can’t seem to do so. Even in our church, things fall apart, and it’s through the Sticky Spirit that we find ourselves still bonded together as family.

This Thanksgiving, while giving thanks to God for our many blessings, may you find the glue that holds you together, and may you continue to stick to the Spirit who holds all things together as you give thanks.

² <https://midmichiganmoms.com/parenting/i-am-the-glue-that-holds-my-family-together/>

¹ <https://baynebox.com/news/the-history-of-glue/>