

Do These Selfish New Dating Trends Describe Your Relationship With Jesus?

Pocketing and cookie jarring. To paraphrase a line from *The Princess Bride*, “I do not think it means what you think it means.” One thing’s for sure: neither phrase means what *I* thought they meant!

Both terms are now used to describe dating trends.

“Pocketing” occurs when the relationship seems as if it’s progressing, but your partner has not introduced you to family or long-term friends. They’re enjoying the fun relationship, but they don’t see a future with you. In the words of the owner of a matchmaking service, “Why get friends and family involved?”

“Cookie jarring” occurs when the person you’re dating keeps you as a backup while they pursue a serious relationship with someone else. They consider it to be a practical backup plan “just in case.” Sort of like keeping the cookie jar full in case you experience a snack attack.

So who are you pocketing, and who’s in your cookie jar?

I’m not talking about someone you might be dating. (And no, I’m not dating!)

I *am* talking about your relationship with Jesus.

How many professing Christians keep Jesus in our “pocket”? We hesitate to be open about our beliefs because friends and family wouldn’t understand. Even worse, there might be open hostility. The result is a compartmentalized life, keeping Jesus separate from other areas.

Or how many professing Christians treat Jesus like a cookie jar: dipping our hand in when we have a need? The rest of the time, we go merrily on our way pursuing people, interests and activities that have little to do with a life committed to being a Christ-follower.

Commitment

It's a term used in describing relationships with other people *and* with Jesus Christ. Are we committed Christians or Christians in name only? Is Christ Lord of our whole life, or do we limit His reign to certain "pockets"? Do we only seek God's hand when we need something, or do we pursue His heart?

I've been studying and teaching from the book of Acts recently. And I've been impressed by the difference between the early disciples of Christ and many of us today. In Acts 4, Peter and John were imprisoned for their faith, yet afterward they prayed, "Lord, look on their threats and grant that your servants may speak Your word with great boldness" (Acts 4:2). They did not pray for safety; they prayed for boldness!

A short time later, these same men were jailed and flogged for proclaiming Christ again, yet they were "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41b). Can I say the same thing?

If I'm honest, there are times when I'm less like Peter and John and more like someone who keeps Christ in a pocket or a cookie jar. Times when I hesitate to proclaim Jesus Christ because I don't want to be *that* person—the one people avoid because she's a religious fanatic. Times when I pursue things that are convenient, comfortable and safe, rather than speaking up about the one people need, even if they don't realize it.

Then I think about persecuted Christians today. In places such as China, the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere, Christians are imprisoned, beaten and killed for their faith. These

Christians understand Peter and John. What they do not understand are the people who are pocketing and cookie jarring the Savior.

Every Christ-follower has the indwelling Holy Spirit who gives boldness when needed to proclaim Jesus Christ. Let's not keep Him in a cookie jar. {eoa}

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