

"The grabbing hands grab all they can. Everything counts in large amounts..." These were the lyrics ringing through our speaker system after my husband bought a CD remix of a popular group out of the '80s.¹ It is amazing to me how true these words are in our culture and our world today. Allow me to share an example. A few months back I was watching a live concert on television, I can't remember which channel. Anyway, it was a beautifully harmonized, robed choir singing another song out of the '80s (*I'm showing my age, aren't I?*): "We are the world, we are the children. We're the ones who make a brighter day, so let's start givin'."² The extremely large crowd was swaying with every arm way up high in the air. Their eyes were closed, and it looked as if some sort of revival was about to take place. As corny as this sounds, I actually got goose bumps. Those dissolved as quickly as they came, however, when the crowd began to roar over a popular celebrity who walked out on stage (*the one who recorded the song*). As the shining star took over the spotlight, he took off his leather jacket, lassoed it in the air and tossed it into the crowd. Well, the hands that were just surrendered in the declaration to "start giving" began fighting over that leather jacket. Thank goodness they didn't have candles or the place would've been on fire! All the while, the robed choir moved forward to surround and sing with the celebrity, and you could actually see certain members nudging each other out of the way so they could be closest to him. Yup, we are the world, and sometimes we act like children...

As easy as the cynicism flows and the judgment follows, the Lord wants us to take these kinds of situations to search our own attitudes. Before we look at the speck of greed in the crowd, we need to look at the planks of selfishness in ourselves (*Matthew 7:3 applied in this context*). As Christians, what do we grab while the grabbin's good? Some of the things that come to my mind are food (*super-size me!*), the last pair of shoes on the rack, the road (*that lane is mine!*), the front pew at church, the closest parking spot, as well as the remote control after a hard day's work. Some of us even feel a need to rush to the spotlight for some well-deserved attention or to fight over the open position at our jobs. The list goes on and on, and we can somehow force ourselves to believe this mentality is needed to get ahead in life, or at the very least, to survive this life.

Jesus' way of thinking is the opposite; instead, He teaches in Matthew 6:33 to "seek first His righteousness," and in 6:19 NOT "to store up for ourselves treasures on this earth." Does this mean we can't have possessions? No, but He wants us to come empty-handed, seeking Him before all else.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

IN THIS WAY THEY WILL LAY UP TREASURE FOR THEMSELVES AS A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR THE COMING AGE, SO THAT THEY MAY TAKE HOLD OF THE LIFE THAT IS TRULY LIFE."

1 Timothy 6:17-19

If we believe these words, then is it possible our entire mentality needs a makeover? It's not just about grabbing things, as in possessions; it's also about having an attitude of "I deserve this" or "It's my turn now." Jesus could've had anything He wanted, but He spent His life giving—He opened his hands and arms wide in His living AND in His death. He wants

us to understand this message and get it while the gettin's good, my friends. So let's "DO good, be rich in good deeds, being generous and willing to share," grabbing hold of THE LIFE that is truly life—the one that seeks Jesus each and every day in every way in all that we do and say...with open hands, we pray. Amen.

¹ Lyrics taken from the song Everything Counts by Depeche Mode

² Lyrics taken from the song We Are The World by Michael Jackson