

Who Is the Owner?

Mark 11:27-12:17 We have had the privilege of having two exchange students live with us—a Chinese girl and a Russian boy. Both became like a daughter and son to us, and they called us Mom and Dad. Our Chinese daughter has returned to China where she lives with her parents and sister. What a joy it has been to be enriched by two of God's precious treasures. People are God's inheritance, and we have learned over the years that in order for us to fully enjoy God, we must also take pleasure in His treasures.

I'll never forget one night when I shared my heart with my Russian son. He had become a little frustrated with me since I took his things out of the dryer in order to dry some of my things. His response was, "Don't touch my things." I went upstairs and prayed, and later that night I asked him, "Who owns this house?" He responded, "You do." Then I asked, "Who owns this dryer?" He responded, "You and Dad do." Then I shared, "You are wrong on both counts, because Dad and I own nothing. We are only stewards of God's treasures on earth." Then I shared with him that we learned the hard way to hold all we enjoy on this earth with an open hand, because everything we think we possess in this life—houses, family, etc.—in reality belongs to the Lord.

In this passage in Mark, Jesus' response to the Pharisees' and Herodians' question, "Shall we give or not give tribute to Caesar?", reveals how God views true ownership. Jesus responded, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." They marveled at Him. Jesus with this answer was saying that all things on this earth are of Him, for Him and by Him because He created all things. Caesar owned nothing. He created Caesar and all Caesar thought he owned. When we recognize true ownership, the right we thought we had to ownership of our possessions on this earth will be erased.

When we recognize that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills and created all things for His pleasure, then jealousy, covetousness, pride and greed are dealt a severe blow. We begin to have a thankful heart for even the smallest things God has allowed us to be stewards of on this earth. A steward only has to take care of the things he is lent for a season. He is not burdened down with all the details the owner has to deal with daily. God owns us and everything we enjoy on this earth. But He is never burdened down with having to see to the details about all that concerns us. In fact, the Bible says His burden is light. God is the owner of all, and He enjoys caring for all that is a concern to us. Peter tells us the way we can humble ourselves before God is to cast all of our cares upon Him. I have often said, "The more a person has, the more he has to take care of, and sometimes it becomes a burden." This problem can easily be solved when we recognize true ownership. I now say, "The more a person has, the more he has to release to God for Him to care for, and He knows how to perfect everything that is a concern to us." What a relief to know I do not have to hold on possessively to anything in this life. I am set free to take pleasure in all God has lent me on earth even as He takes pleasure in all He has created.

**READ: Numbers 2:1–3:51; Mark 11:27–12:17; Psalm 47:1–9;
Proverbs 10:24–25**