

## IT IS REALL YOURS!

The money is yours! The property is yours too. You bought it fair and square! The houses are also yours and even the hotels. In a little while, however, the game will be over and everything you owned, included your proof of ownership, will go back in the box. In this instance it is only a game of Monopoly. Your ownership was temporary. It only lasted a few hours. You really did own those things but when the game was over your ownership ended and everything went back in the box.

Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus. He “owned” a piece of property and sold it. Then he brought the money and gave it to the apostles (Acts 4:36,37). This generosity made him so popular that Ananias and Sapphira conspired to also be popular. They sold a piece of property. They owned that property. When they received money for that property it was their money. It was in their power and they could do with it whatever they chose. They foolishly pretended to give it all the Lord, but really didn’t. They decided to keep back some of the money for themselves. It was their money. They could do anything with it they wanted to. So they decided to keep back some and lie about it. Peter confronted Ananias and said: **“Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God”.** **WHEN ANANIAS HEARD THIS, HE FELL DOWN AND DIED (Acts 5:1-5)** About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. She also lied to the Holy Spirit and died (Acts 5:7-11). They really did own the property and control the money. Not just for a few hours, but for a few years. When they died, however, the game of life was over and everything they owned went back in the box for someone else to own.

The private ownership of property is an integral part of God’s plan for his people.

- Abraham bought a piece of ground from Ephron the Hittite to bury his dead (Gen. 23:16).
- The Promised Land was divided among the 12 tribes by lot. The larger tribes were permitted to own larger sections of land. Each tribe really owned the land God gave them (Nu. 26:52-56).
- Every family in the tribes also owned their own private property. This privilege was not just for men but was also extended to the daughters of Zelophehad even though there was no man in their family.
- The private ownership of property was so sacred that King Ahab died because he dared to steal a vineyard that belonged to a lowly peasant named Naboth (1 Ki. 21:1-19).
- If you became poor and were forced to sell your property, it was to be returned to you in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10). You really owned the property.
- Your “ownership”, however, ends when you die. Remember the parable Jesus told about the rich fool. After harvesting a bumper crop he planned to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. He foolishly assumed that he had “many years” to enjoy what he owned. He was wrong! God said to him: **“You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will what you have prepared for yourself? THIS IS HOW IT WILL BE WITH ANYONE WHO STORES UP THINGS FOR HIMSELF BUT IS NOT RICH TOWARD GOD.” (Lk. 12:20,21).** Please note that while the rich man did own a great many things, when he died that ownership was transferred to someone else. **FURTHER, GOD HELD HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS STEWARDSHIP OF WHAT GOD ENTRUSTED HIM WITH!**
- The importance of our stewardship cannot be over emphasized. As Jesus said: **“IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TRUSTWORTHY IN HANDLING WORLDLY WEALTH, WHO WILL TRUST YOU WITH TRUE RICHES” (Lk. 16:11).**
- The “Good News” is that right now we can store up treasures in heaven **“where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matt. 6:20).** **WHEN WE INHERIT THESE ETERNAL TREASURES THEY WON’T GO BACK IN THE BOX!**