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**LEVITICUS 19:32**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"You know I can't come, Alissa. Sure, I'd like to. But there's no way I can." Caitlyn's voice broke; she felt tears sting her eyes. Why couldn't Alissa stop questioning her?

"It's not that I don't want to," Caitlyn stated emphatically into the phone, "it's simply that I can't. Please! You know how things are since dear Gram's

been living with us. I can't help it. I wish you'd at least try to understand. You're being unreasonable, Alissa. I didn't ask to be placed in this position. Sure. Sure, I know I'm missing out on a lot of things. But Grandma just cannot stay by herself, and I love her. What? Oh no! She can't be alone; not even for one hour. I'm sorry, Alissa, but. . . ."

The phone clicked on the other end of the line and Caitlyn knew Alissa had hung up on her. "Oh no!" she exclaimed to no one but herself.

She knew that Alissa was very much upset with her for not going to the mall with her and that it might be days before her friend would call again. Alissa was extremely temperamental and selfish. She was used to pretty much, getting what she wanted or asked for and to having her own way. She whined and fretted if she came over to Caitlyn's house and she (Caitlyn) had to finish her after-school chores and obligations before she could do whatever it was Alissa wanted to do, like studying together, playing the piano or going shopping.

Caitlyn felt sad. She had tried so hard to help Alissa to see that Christians were true to their word and that they kept their promises, as well. To Alissa, however, it seemed to matter little -- or nothing, even -- if she fulfilled or broke a promise. All that mattered to her was that she be able to do what she wanted to do when she wanted to do it. Generally, she was in command of things: her parents felt she was old enough to do as she pleased.

Caitlyn hurried down the hallway to Gram's room and peeked into the bedroom. Gram was still asleep. Bless her! How peaceful and sweet she looked, she thought. It was difficult and extremely hard for her to believe that her once mentally sharp and very brilliant grandmother had become so senile and forgetful. Instead of the once doing-for-everybodyelse grandma she had always known, the pattern of things was now reversed and each of them had to do and care for Grandma.

How humiliating and frustrating this would be to Gram if she could realize what was taking place and happening right here in their house, Caitlyn soliloquized pensively and sadly. Gram was always such an independent and helping soul. Now she had to be told when to put her shoes on and when to take them off, as the case might be. Even little, everyday, routine and habitual things could not be remembered.

"Please, Jesus, take care of Grandma," Caitlyn prayed as she left the room and hurried to the kitchen to make the chocolate cake which her mother had told her to bake before she left for the hospital.

Caitlyn was delighted that she could be of help to both her mother, who was a registered nurse, and to dear, sweet Gram, whose Christian life she had tried to follow and pattern after since she herself became a Christian as a little girl and shortly after was sanctified wholly. Then too, she knew that in a very real and tangible way she was being helpful to her father by being the stay-at-home lady who had meals ready on time and kept the house in neat order while keeping an eye on Grandma and caring for her after school.

Caitlyn sang softly while she worked. Her heart felt light and joyful. Work had its own compensation, she thought with a satisfied smile. First of all, it produced a great sense of true satisfaction that seemed to grow and grow inside of her. It gave her a feeling of worth, too: a good feeling of being of value to others and of being genuinely helpful. Little wonder then that she felt happy; her working had rewarded her bountifully with the joyous feeling.

She had just finished frosting the beautiful cake and put the meatloaf into the oven for baking when the telephone rang.

"Coming," she said, as if the phone could hear her words.

"Caitlyn," it was Alissa again. "I refuse to take no for an answer this time. You're going shopping with me. You haven't been out of the house since your grandmother arrived. It's time someone thinks about you and your needs too."

"Wait a minute, Alissa: I have too been out of the house since Gram came here. I go to school regularly and to church and Sunday school and. . ."

"Poof! Who cares about such things!" Alissa exclaimed nonchalantly and indifferently, interrupting Caitlyn's unfinished sentence. "I mean, you need a diversion; something different. You need to go shopping."

Caitlyn sighed. "Alissa, believe me, I can't. I wouldn't think of leaving dear Grandma alone in her present physical condition. She's of far greater importance and worth to me than any shopping trip."

"She's an old woman, Caitlyn. How can you love her so? Furthermore, no grandparent of mine will ever keep me from doing what I want to do. Leaving her alone just once isn't going to kill her. It may help her, even. If you ask me, I'd say your grandma's a little schemer; she knows who's soft and how to get attention and. . . ."

"Alissa! Stop it! Please! Grandma is not a little schemer. Nor has she ever been. Grandma loves the Lord. She's a devout Christian."

"Then she should be perfectly capable and able to handle things for a few hours without you. I still say she's taking all of you across. Old people do strange things to get attention."

"Alissa, I'm sorry, but I won't allow you to speak so disrespectfully about older people; my grandmother, especially. You have no respect for the elderly, and no love or pity for them either. This is wicked; it's wrong. So very wrong. When God was giving Moses the different laws and ordinances for the Israelites, He said, and I'm quoting from the Bible now, in Leviticus 19:32, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.'

"The Lord said that to Moses. That hoary head -or gray or white haired person -- is to be honored and respected. In fact, we are told to 'rise up before them' as a gesture of honor and respect toward them and for them: both men and women. Some of the sweetest and dearest people I know are old, and white or gray headed: Grandma is one of these. I admire her greatly. I've learned more from the elderly people, I guess, than I'll ever learn from those who are my peers and counterparts.

"With the godly and saintly elderly, there are vast treasures of wisdom and insight. I love old people, Alissa. I have always loved them and respected them. God has used the wise counsel of my parents and grandparents to steer me past many a pitfall and wicked or evil thing. I treasure their advice."

"Spare me the overtones of a sermon, Cait, please! Old people bore me to death. They have the feeling that we're a bunch of ingrates whose sole desire is to party and have fun."

"Are you sure they aren't right on target, Alissa? Father has often told me that when he was growing up it was rare, if ever, to find a young person who was disrespectful to anybody; certainly not to anybody who was old. Never! They loved their elderly grandparents-and parents, too, as they grew old -- and their aunts and uncles. And they were taught to work: the girls learned how to cook and bake and keep house and care for their younger sisters and brothers, while the boys learned whatever trade their father did and was working at. Many of them took up farming, like their father. Father said the young people never caused trouble or problems in those days, like they're doing now, in our day."

"I'm enjoying my day too much to ever want to go back to those stuffy old times and days," Alissa stated emphatically. "It seems as if everything they did must have been dull, dull, dull! Imagine it, church all the time! No malls. No electronic games. No computers. No TV's. No videos."

"But God, Alissa. They were satisfied with God and with the simple ways of life."

"What do you mean by that? Life must have been one big, dull bore. I'm glad I'm living now."

"God made all the difference in their lives. Those days, God sent Holy Ghost revivals down from Heaven. Life was not boring, Alissa: from things Grandma and Father and Mother have told me, it was wonderful. Crime was almost an unheard of thing. People never locked their doors, day or night. Those were the days of revival meetings; days when young and old feared God and worshipped Him at home and in the churches; days when parents were kind to their children and loved them greatly and when, in return, the young people loved and respected their parents and their elderly. Something's missing in today's society: God's been crowded out and removed, and since we don't fear Him anymore, we've lost our respect for our elderly and for those who are over us."

"There you go again," Alissa cried. "Think what you want to; as for me, I'm having too good a time living the way I want to live and doing the things I

want to do. No old person is going to keep me from doing what I want to do, neither will they keep me from going to the mall." There was a hint of sarcasm in Alissa's voice. "Now, one more time, will you go with me?"

"Thanks, Alissa, the answer's unchanged: No. Grandma is of far greater importance and worth to me than any shopping trip will ever be."

"Let her ruin your life then," Alissa declared angrily and hung up.

Hurrying down the hallway to check on Grandma again, Caitlyn realized suddenly why Alissa had scarcely any friends: she was selfish and bossy and extremely demanding, always wanting her own way, and getting angry when and if she didn't get it.

"Poor Alissa," Caitlyn said, with a feeling of near regret for having befriended her so many times only to be "rewarded" with the usual outburst of anger when she didn't comply with Alissa's demands or commands.

Caitlyn knew, however, that she dare not--must not--turn away from her or reject her, like so many had already done. More than ever, Alissa needed her friendship and her patience and love. And who was to say that she would never change? Maybe even now, that change was taking place by the moving of the sweet Holy Ghost in her heart. If she ever had the heart change, in answer to Caitlyn's fervent prayers, she would then love and respect the elderly. Yes, even dear, sweet Gram, Caitlyn thought with a thrill of expectancy as she looked down at her sleeping grandparent and whispered a silent prayer for her safety and continued protection.