

Avoid Devastating Anger—Ask Yourself This Question First

It still amazes me how after all the years I've been following Christ, I can still sometimes get upset over such small things. I thought by now I'd be completely past that but I'm human and sometimes I let my humanness override my godliness. And I've worked with Christian people long enough to know that I'm not the only one. Even though I sometimes fall short, thankfully I've grown over the years and don't find this happening as often. So I thought I'd share a couple of things that have helped me in this area.

I remember when my oldest daughter was in middle school. She started dressing in, what I felt at the time, was a little strange. She would wear two different color high top tennis shoes, put her hair into a frizzy side ponytail, and hang a large key from one of her large hoop earrings. She thought this was so cool, but we were pastors and I knew how critical congregations can be, especially of pastor's kids. So I really wasn't happy about this.

As I was contemplating on what to say to my daughter and how to handle this, I felt the Lord begin to calm me down. Then I heard a phrase that changed everything: *"Major on the majors, not on the minors."* I realized at that moment that this fashion statement was a minor thing and not nearly as important as whether or not my daughter loved God.

I began to think about her attitude toward Jesus and church. She was a 12-year-old girl who loved and honored God and her parents. What did it really matter if she wanted to dress a little differently as long as it was in fun and not rebellion? This daughter is now an adult with a daughter of her own. She still likes to dress more flamboyantly than my older conservative way but she loves God and is raising her own

daughter to do the same. By not making a big deal out of the many small things that try to overtake us, we can then concentrate on the bigger picture of serving God.

Over the years I've heard the heart of God saying things like: "What will this matter in a hundred years or even five years?" We let so many things steal our joy by making them so important. Yet with time, many of them we can't even remember.

Next time you are tempted to overreact to a situation, ask yourself, "How important is this in the overall kingdom perspective?" Remember, Jesus said to Martha, "You are worried and upset about many things but only one thing is needed." We are so much like Martha. We get worried and upset about so many things that distract us from what's really important.

Of course, I know there are things that need to be done and situations that need to be handled but we must keep them in the right perspective and handle them with grace. We don't want to miss the beauty of the forest because we are always inspecting the individual trees.

Father, help us to discern the distractions for what they are and to keep our eyes on the big picture. We want to see things from Your point of view. Help each of us to walk out our lives with a kingdom perspective.

Don't sweat the small stuff!

*Adapted from Diana's Corner blog on Dustin Smith Ministries (DSM). **Diana Trout**, along with her husband Tom, have over 30 years of experience pastoring the local body. They both serve local churches by traveling as a part of DSM, teaching and speaking all over the nation. You can hear Dustin and James' podcast through the DSM app or iTunes.*