

## "The 3 Scopes of Ministry"

October 11, 2016, Grace Leaders Network, meeting at Grace Church of Orange

### *Scope it Out.*

I once had a knee injury that I had to get checked. Went to a doctor and he looked at it. They took some tests. Turns out that I had sprained or partially torn my left MCL. It took a while for the doctor to get back to me but at one point he says to me "I don't really see anything wrong with it but why don't we just scope it out." I said no thanks. He wanted to go where he wasn't needed. I happen to think that scooping out our hearts and ministry lives would be a very helpful thing to do. I know it has recently helped me immensely.

Maybe one of the biggest mistakes I have made in life and ministry is not wisely discerning what scope is needed in a given situation (what needs a [stethoscope](#), a [microscope](#), or a [telescope](#)?). Many times I've been drawn into *minutia*, getting lost in the *weeds*, on topics that I have no business getting into. I should've left that to the person in charge with that responsibility. I'm learning. Late in the game probably. But I'm learning.

### *6 week Pastoral Sabbatical summer 7/11-8/23.*

*I git top take one 16 years earlier at my former church. Now, after 31 years of pastoral ministry at three churches. Grace elders, leadership, church...very generous, encouraging. Allowed me to go.*

*While gone I picked up some Scopes...Garage sale enthusiast (addict), since college. This summer...garage sale in villa park in Orange. Stethoscope...Telescope...Microscope.*

*One day as I was sitting in my living room I was contemplating the antique telescope and a few thoughts started to germinate in my mind.*

*In Life and Ministry, it is helpful to consider which scope needs to be used and when...(knowing when to use, or not use, each one, is crucial to effective ministry with people.)*

**1. Stethoscope**...heartbeat...of an issue, a person, a group, and most importantly you, where is your heart on it?

**1 Samuel 16:7** - God looks on the heart.

**Prov. 4:23** Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life. Above all else, watch over your heart, for everything flows from it.

The mouth speaks from that which fills the heart.

Where is your heart? What is the condition of your heart? What's the heartbeat of the people that comprise this family, group, or local church? In some ways, everything needs to first have the stethoscope applied. You want to operate on a heart level with people. Shepherd the flock.

**Stethoscope...**These are the kind of needs that maybe you need to get up close momentarily, diagnose, then let someone else take the specialist role. Maybe it's a heart condition in your own life, a need for repentance, or need for community. Need to be careful here because it's really easy for us to judge other's hearts. The biblical model is very clear, we are to judge ourselves lest we be judged.

**Blessing...**

**Some basic life and ministry heartbeat things...**

Praying - Preaching - Peopling.

Saved - Strong - Serving - Sharing.

Love - Lead - Listen - Learn.

2-3 minutes to digest it/write things down with the Lord, then have a 8-10 minutes to have people talk about it at their tables.

**2. Microscope**...a deep dive into the details...**What tasks and responsibilities really needs your direct attention and involvement?**

Knowing when to **back off** is not easy for people with a bent towards **control**.

Knowing when to **wade in** is tough for those who have a bent towards **abdication responsibility**.

I have recently been finding much freedom in discovering when to not look in the microscope. Let those called to that task do it.

**When to speak to Specifics...**

**Eph. 4-5; 1 Thess. 2-4...**

**2 Timothy 2:14-19**

Microscope things are things that need your immediate attention up close and personal. This might be a pastoral care need. It might be attending to a staff member who needs your help. This might be working with a member of the flock who has a very crucial and specific need. You can't shy away from it. You must dive deep. Like Paul, be willing to spend and be spent for their souls.

Magnifying glass...sometimes we magnify our own importance. Sometimes we magnify issues. Jesus always needs to be magnified. **John 1 He must increase, and I must decrease.**

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**3. Telescope**...the overall big-picture, wide-angle lens...What doesn't need your direct involvement. Just need the overall, global picture.

**1 Timothy 4:11-16**

**1 Thess. 1:2-8** overall encouragement. + **1 Thess. 5:12-28**

Telescoping should be one of the most freeing steps for us. When we realize that the issue at hand is not our immediate calling. And we don't want to be for slothful or lazy or shirk our responsibility but we need to not move in and try to take charge. Allow the person charged with the responsibility to fulfill their calling. Micro-management is not a godly trait. Many things just need us looking through a telescope, where we lay off and observe from a distance. Be available to consult and to counsel. But do not do it for them and do not drive them too hard.

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Stethoscope, Microscope, Telescope...learning how and when to use each with those you interact with will benefit greatly, for Christ's Kingdom. Serve in Christ's strength and for His glory.

**SOLI DEO GLORIA**