

Shift the Dial Part 3 – WORD FIRST

4 FACTORS that influence our responses, decisions & actions

1. **PREJUDICE / PREFERENCE:** “I KNOW what God says, but if it were UP TO ME, I’d RATHER ...”
 - * Do I **ADJUST** my application of the Word situationally, so it **FITS** what I **PREFER**?
 - * Do I allow the Word to **CONFORM** me or do I twist it to **CONFIRM** my prejudices & preferences?

Do you have any personal prejudices or preferences that make it hard for you to obey particular scriptures?
Are there any ‘tough imperatives’ you haven’t outright rejected, but do still struggle with in practice?

2. **HABITS:** Deeply-ingrained default responses, trained behaviours, learnt defence mechanisms
 - * People don’t always **CHOOSE** sin **CONSCIOUSLY**; they **DEFAULT** to it **UNCONSCIOUSLY**.
 - * The Danger: **HABIT** kicks in before the **WORD** has had the chance to speak.

Do you have any default responses, trained behaviours or learnt defence mechanisms that you stills struggle with?
How do you break the influence of those strong habitual overreactions/
What could help you slow down enough for the Word to speak before habit takes over?

3. **EMOTIONS** can be **LOUD, PERSUASIVE & HARD TO IGNORE**
 - * In the heat of the moment, we often react **IMPULSIVELY** depending on how we **FEEL**, rather than respond **PROACTIVELY** according to what **THE WORD SAYS**.

Which emotions most often influence your reactions: anger, fear, frustration, hurt or something else? Why do they feel so convincing in the moment?
How can we acknowledge our feelings honestly without allowing them to lead us?
What might it look like to respond proactively according to Scripture instead of impulsively according to emotion?

4. **EASE:** Our natural pull is to what feels **EASY, SAFE & COMFORTABLE**.
 - * We tend to choose the **PATH** of **LEAST RESISTANCE**: avoiding **COMPLICATION** or **CONFRONTATION**, even if it means **COMPROMISING**.

Where are you most tempted to choose comfort over obedience?
Why can avoiding difficulty sometimes feel wiser than faithfulness?
Can you share an example where obedience required courage or discomfort?

4 HELPFUL QUESTIONS to ask at crunch point

1. What does the Word say **ABOUT GOD**?
 - * Ensures our **PERSPECTIVE** is rooted in God’s **CHARACTER**, rather than **BIASED** by our own **ASSUMPTIONS**.

How can wrong assumptions about God distort our responses?
How does remembering God’s character change how you view difficult situations?

2. What does the Word say about **WHO I AM** & how should that affect the way I behave?
 - * Asking this question, awakens our new **IDENTITY** in Christ and silences the carnal instincts of what the Bible calls the ‘**OLD MAN**.’

In stressful moments, do you tend to act from your new identity or old instincts?
What practical reminders help you live from who you are in Christ?

3. What does the Word say is the **RIGHT SEED TO SOW**?
 - * Carnal, emotional responses lead to a harvest of **WEEDS**; Word seed produces an infinitely **BETTER HARVEST**.

What kinds of seeds do emotional, fleshly or hasty reactions tend to produce?
Can you recall a time when choosing a godly response led to a better long-term outcome?

4. What does the Word say **I SHOULD DO** & what does it say **I should LEAVE UP TO GOD**?
 - * Our task is to faithfully **OBEY**, not to **ORCHESTRATE** outcomes.

Why is it sometimes hard to obey without trying to micromanage the process or orchestrate the outcome?
How does recognising your part versus the Lord’s part change the paradigm?

INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

1. CLARITY: Instead of 'What do I FEEL?' it becomes, 'What has GOD SAID?'

Which of those two questions do you usually ask first? Which one usually wins? How can you make sure Word First wins?

2. FREEDOM: An UNBURDENED heart ... So many of those INTERNAL BATTLES are over.

How does obedience lead to an unburdened heart?
What internal battle might ease if you fully trusted and followed God's Word?

3. STABILITY: When life ROCKS you, the Word holds STRONG & TRUE.

Why is following your feelings & emotions almost certainly going to lead to instability? How has God's Word held you steady in past challenges?

COLLECTIVE OUTCOMES

1. UNITY: When the Word becomes the shared AUTHORITY, the Holy Spirit draws us TOGETHER in unity (Ps 133)

What impact does the way we collectively treat the Word have on a group's unity (or otherwise)?
What are the dangers of trying to find your unity elsewhere?
Is it really about head agreement or heart attitude?

2. HEALTH: An environment where relationships HEAL quickly, people feel SAFE, ministry FLOURISHES & CREATIVITY sparks.

What does a spiritually healthy environment look like in practice and how is a church's collective attitude to what God has said so crucial to it?
How can we use the principles of the Word to create a culture where relationships heal quickly and people feel safe?

3. WITNESS becomes CLEAR, SWEET& COMPELLING.

How does living 'Word first' make the gospel more visible to others?
In what ways can our shared obedience make our witness clearer and more compelling?