

PARAKLĒSIS

Encouragement that draws near, strengthens the heart and calls us forward.

ISSUE 01 / SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2026

A WORD FOR THE WAY AHEAD

ABOVE, NOT BENEATH

*Living from the place where
obedience meets promise*

DEUTERONOMY 28:13



THE WORD

“And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them.” — Deuteronomy 28:13 (ESV)

THE CONTEXT

A PROMISE WITH A CONNECTION

When we hear the words “the head and not the tail” and “go up and not down,” it is easy to hold on to the promise without stopping to hear everything God is saying. But these words were not spoken on their own. In Deuteronomy 28, God joins the promise to a clear instruction: **“if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God...being careful to do them.”** God was showing Israel what could flow from a life that listened to His voice and walked in His ways.

We cannot separate what God has promised from the way He calls us to live. Yes, we can speak His Word with confidence, but agreeing with God also means allowing His Word to correct us, guide us and change us. Obedience does not earn His love or force Him to bless us. It is the response of a heart that trusts Him. We are saved by grace, and that same grace teaches us how to live. So the promise is not an excuse to overlook obedience; it is an invitation to walk more closely with God.

We also need to remember that these words were first spoken to Israel as part of the covenant God had made with them. They do not promise every Christian the highest position, the most money or the easiest path. But they reveal something important about God: He calls us to listen to Him, walk in His ways and remain faithful wherever He places us.

THE COMFORT

THE LOW PLACE IS NOT THE LAST WORD

Being “above” does not mean that we will never find ourselves in a low place. Joseph knew the pit and the prison. David knew what it was to hide in a cave. Yet the pit did not get to decide who Joseph would become, and the cave did not cancel what God had spoken over David. Even there, God was shaping their character, ordering their steps and preparing them for what was still ahead.

Perhaps your low place is emotional. Perhaps it is financial, relational or simply a season that has not unfolded as you expected. Whatever it looks like, do not read it as proof that God has left you. Your surroundings can change without changing His presence, His purpose or His ability to finish the work He has begun in you.



THE COURAGE

A CLEARER VIEW

If we are not careful, circumstances can begin to explain our lives to us. A delay whispers, “You are behind.” A disappointment says, “You have failed.” Someone else’s progress makes us wonder whether there is any room left for us. But circumstances may describe this moment; they cannot tell you who you are or rewrite God’s purpose.

This is where God’s Word must become the stronger voice. Faith does not pretend that nothing has happened. It simply refuses to let what has happened have the final word. Being the head is not about thinking more highly of ourselves; it is about refusing to be ruled by fear, comparison, other people’s expectations or the values of the culture around us. We do not have to become what the world applauds. We are called to be faithful to what God has asked of us. We rise as we come under His rule.

Being “the head” never gives us permission to become proud, controlling or superior. When God lifts us, responsibility comes with it. He raises us to represent Him well and to serve faithfully wherever He places us.

THE CALL

YOUR NEXT STEP

- 1 Listen before you declare.** Read Deuteronomy 28:1–14 slowly, and notice how often hearing, obedience and blessing are joined together.
- 2 Identify the louder voice.** Where has disappointment, comparison or fear been speaking more loudly than God’s Word? Bring it honestly before Him.
- 3 Take the next obedient step.** You do not have to wait for something dramatic. Begin with what God has already made clear through Scripture and prayer.

HEART CHECK

Is there an area in which you are asking God to change your position while He is asking you to take an obedient step?

ANSWER THE WORD

By the grace of God, I will not allow this season to tell me who I am. I will listen to the Lord, walk in His ways and let His Word shape how I see. Whether I am on the height or in a low place, I belong to God. He is still forming me, and I will take the next obedient step.

PRAY IT THROUGH

Father, thank You that Your Word does more than encourage me; it also shows me how to live. Forgive me for the times I have wanted the promise while resisting the obedience that belongs with it. Quiet every voice that has been speaking more loudly than You. Give me grace to hear You, trust You and obey You. Lift my perspective, order my steps and form in me the character to carry what You have purposed. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CONTINUE IN SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 28:1–14 • Joshua 1:7–9
John 14:21 • James 1:22–25

SHARE THE WORD

What would obedience look like in the area where you most want to see change?

CARRY THIS WITH YOU

The promise lifts my perspective; obedience orders my steps.

Pass this word to someone who may need its comfort, courage or call.

CONTINUE WITH BEAUTY FOR ASHES

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