Yadah and a Life of Thanksgiving

Thanks Living Series

Bethesda Churches

God's goodness gives us reasons to be grateful before we receive the next answer to prayer. In this lesson, we will explore the meaning of Yadah, recognize the gifts God gives to all humanity, and consider the blessings we receive through Jesus Christ. We will practice expressing gratitude and choose a way to carry thanksgiving into daily life.

By the end of our time together, you should be able to explain Yadah, name three reasons every person should thank God, identify five blessings of belonging to Him, and express a specific response of gratitude.

Part 1 Remembering Someone Who Made a Difference

Think about a person who has made a profound impact in your life. This could be your mother, father, teacher, brother, another relative, coworker, church member, or someone else whose kindness or guidance changed you.

Consider these questions, then share your response with a partner or small group:

1. If you had an opportunity today to tell this person about the impact they made in your life, what would you say?

2. If you could do one thing to show this person thanks today, what would you do?

Begin with: "You made a difference in my life when you…" Be specific about what happened and why it mattered. If the person has died or cannot be contacted, you can still honor their influence by writing your words or practicing something good they taught you.

Why thanksgiving matters

Remembering a person's kindness often changes how we see them. We recognize the effort they made, the need they met, or the cost of what they gave. Gratitude begins when we stop treating a gift as something we were simply owed.

The same principle helps us respond to God. We can become so familiar with His gifts that we stop noticing the Giver. Thanksgiving recognizes His goodness and gives Him the acknowledgment He deserves. It also challenges the assumption that everything good in our lives came from our own strength.

Romans 1:21 KJV

> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Paul connects knowing God with the responsibility to honor and thank Him. Gratitude helps us acknowledge the truth about our dependence on Him. Receiving His gifts while refusing to acknowledge Him is a spiritual problem.

Thanksgiving does not require us to pretend that life is easy. We can grieve, ask for help, and still acknowledge real mercy. A grateful life makes room for honest prayer and sincere praise together.

Discuss: Why might someone appreciate a gift but never express thanks to the person who gave it? How might this happen in our relationship with God?

Part 2 Understanding Yadah

YADAH is a Hebrew verb commonly translated “give thanks,” “praise,” “confess,” or “acknowledge,” depending on its context. In this lesson, we focus on acknowledging God with thankful praise. Strong’s Hebrew number is H3034.

Traditional explanations associate Yadah with extending the hands. Lifting our hands can express gratitude, surrender, and acknowledgment of God. However, the word does not mean that every occurrence describes raised hands. Its central meaning in these passages is thankful acknowledgment. The attitude matters, and the expression should be sincere.

Four Scriptures That Use Yadah

1 Psalm 107:1 KJV

> O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Yadah appears in “give thanks.” The verse gives a reason for thanksgiving: God is good, and His mercy endures. We begin with His character rather than allowing the day’s circumstances to determine whether He deserves acknowledgment.

2 Psalm 138:1 KJV

> I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

Yadah appears in “I will praise thee.” Wholehearted praise gives God our sincere attention. We can participate outwardly while remaining distracted inwardly. This verse calls us to bring our hearts into our expression of praise.

3 Genesis 29:35 KJV

> And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

Yadah appears in “I will praise the LORD.” Leah acknowledges God at Judah’s birth. Her thanksgiving takes place within a difficult family story. This moment shows that gratitude can be expressed before every painful part of life has been resolved.

4 Psalm 100:4 KJV

> Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Yadah appears in “be thankful unto him.” The earlier word translated “thanksgiving” is the related noun todah. The verse connects approaching God with acknowledging Him. We come remembering His goodness, with something to give as well as something to request.

Discuss one question: Which passage best describes the thanksgiving you need to practice? What is the difference between moving your hands and sincerely acknowledging God with your heart?

Part 3 Thanksgiving in the New Testament

The New Testament was written in Greek. There is no single Greek word that replaces Yadah in every context. Two words help us understand the connection.

Exomologeō means to acknowledge or confess and, in praise contexts, to give thanks or praise. It is a close counterpart to Yadah's language of acknowledgment. Its Strong's number is G1843.

Matthew 11:25 KJV

> At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

"I thank thee" translates a form of exomologeō. Jesus acknowledges the Father's wisdom in revealing truth to the humble and receptive. Thanksgiving can recognize what God has revealed, as well as what He has provided.

Eucharisteō means to give thanks or express gratitude. This word appears in the account of the grateful leper and in the command to give thanks in every circumstance. Its Strong's number is G2168.

Luke 17:15–19 KJV

> 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,
>
> 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.
>
> 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
>
> 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.
>
> 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

"Giving him thanks" in verse 16 is a form of eucharisteō. Ten men received cleansing as they followed Jesus' instruction. One returned to acknowledge Him. The passage does not reveal what the nine felt; it shows that only one returned to express thanks. The returning man's gratitude became visible and audible. Jesus personally affirmed his faith.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 KJV

> In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

"Give thanks" is also a form of eucharisteō. We can thank God in difficult circumstances without calling evil good or denying pain. Gratitude remembers that our circumstances do not erase every evidence of His goodness.

Discuss: What did the returning man do that moved gratitude beyond a private feeling? What mercy can you acknowledge while you are still praying about an unresolved need?

Part 4 Three Reasons Every Person Should Thank God

God's kindness reaches people who acknowledge Him and people who do not. These gifts do not mean that everyone has received salvation. They mean that every person has reason to recognize the Creator's goodness and respond to Him.

1 God gives us life and breath

Acts 17:24–25 KJV

> 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;
>
> 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Paul spoke these words in Athens to people who did not yet know the true God. He identified God as the Giver of life to all. Our existence is a gift before it is an achievement. Education, work, and personal effort matter, but none makes us the source of our own life.

We can acknowledge the life God has given without claiming that everyone enjoys the same health or abilities. Every person bears dignity and depends on the Creator.

Personal response: "God, thank You for the life You have given me. Help me use it faithfully."

2 God provides the created gifts that sustain human life

Acts 14:17 KJV

> Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Matthew 5:45 KJV

> That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Sunshine, rain, fruitful seasons, and food reveal God's goodness beyond the community of believers. Paul addressed idol worshippers in Acts 14. Jesus explicitly described gifts that reach the just and the unjust.

Provision should not become invisible simply because it is familiar. These passages also do not claim that everyone has enough food or equal access to resources. Gratitude for what we receive should move us to share with people in need.

Personal response: "God, thank You for what sustains me. Make me generous with what I have."

3 God shows patience that calls us to repentance

Romans 2:4 KJV

> Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

God's patience is a reason to turn toward Him. We should not mistake His kindness for approval of sin or assume that we have unlimited time. The opportunity to hear His Word, repent, and respond to Him is precious.

Personal response: "God, thank You for Your patience. Help me respond to Your goodness today."

Discuss: Which of these gifts do you most often overlook? How should gratitude change the way we treat people who do not yet know God?

Part 5 Five Reasons Children of God Should Give Thanks

Everyone receives evidence of God's kindness. Those who belong to Jesus also have specific reasons to thank Him for the saving work He has done and the relationship He has given us. These blessings invite humility, faithful obedience, and love for others.

1 Redemption and the forgiveness of sins

Ephesians 1:7 KJV

> In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

"In whom" refers to Christ. Redemption speaks of our release through the price He paid. Forgiveness rests on His grace and the shedding of His blood. We have reason to thank Him for dealing with our guilt and opening the way to a restored relationship with God.

When forgiveness becomes familiar, we can forget its cost. Remembering Christ's sacrifice helps us resist pride and treat others with mercy. Our testimony should give Jesus the credit for what He has done.

My response: "Jesus, thank You for Your blood and the forgiveness of my sins."

2 The love that makes us God's children

1 John 3:1–2 KJV

> 1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
>
> 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

John calls us to notice the greatness of God's love. Belonging to Him gives us a relationship and an identity that human approval cannot supply. Even when others misunderstand our faith, we can remember whose children we are.

This relationship also shapes how we live. Gratitude for the Father's love should influence how we speak to Him, respond to His correction, and care for His people.

My response: "Father, thank You for loving me and receiving me as Your child."

3 The gift of the Holy Ghost

Acts 2:38–39 KJV

> 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
>
> 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Peter answered the people's response to the gospel with a call to repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the promise of the Holy Ghost. We should value God's gift of His Spirit and the new life He gives. Receiving the Holy Ghost is a reason for continuing gratitude, not merely a memory of one meaningful service.

If you are seeking this gift, the passage invites you to respond to God. If you have received it, remember His grace and continue yielding your life to Him.

My response: "Jesus, thank You for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Help me yield to You daily."

4 God's faithful presence and help

Hebrews 13:5–6 KJV

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Here "conversation" means our manner of life. The passage connects contentment with God's promise of His presence. Our security does not have to rise and fall with our possessions or with other people's approval.

God's presence does not promise a life without difficulty. It gives us reason to trust Him within difficulty. We can bring Him our fears while thanking Him that we do not face them without His help.

My response: "Lord, thank You that You will never leave me or forsake me."

5 Living hope and an eternal inheritance

1 Peter 1:3–4 KJV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

"Lively hope" means living hope. Jesus' resurrection gives His people a future grounded in His victory over death. Earthly possessions wear out, and present circumstances can change. The inheritance Peter describes does not decay or lose its purity.

This hope matters when we grieve or endure trials. We do not have to pretend the present is painless. We can thank God that our present trouble is not the full measure of the future He has promised.

My response: "Jesus, thank You for Your resurrection and the living hope You have given me."

Personal Reflection

Choose one question to discuss:

1. Which of these five blessings has become so familiar that you rarely thank God for it?

2. How could remembering one of these blessings change your response to a present difficulty?

3. How should gratitude for salvation influence the way we treat someone who is still seeking God?

Complete this sentence: "Because God has given me _____, I will respond by _____."

Part 6 Practicing Thanks Living

Colossians 3:17 KJV

> And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Thanksgiving belongs in our words and our deeds. It can shape the way we work, use our resources, worship, and care for people. We thank God because He deserves acknowledgment. We do not use praise as a payment intended to purchase another blessing.

A Personal Response of Yadah

Take a quiet moment to identify one specific gift of God. Speak your thanks to Him. If you choose, lift your hands as an expression of acknowledgment and gratitude. If you cannot lift your hands, you can still sincerely thank Him with your heart and voice.

Complete these responses in your own words:

1. “God, I have often overlooked the gift of…”
2. “Jesus, today I specifically thank You for…”
3. “One way I will express my gratitude this week is…”

Return to the person you remembered in the icebreaker. Choose a practical way to express your thanks. Let that action remind you to acknowledge God deliberately as well.

A Seven Day Practice

Each day this week, name one gift of God, thank Him specifically, and choose an action that reflects your gratitude. You might share a meal, encourage someone, serve faithfully, or tell someone what God has done. At the end of the week, consider how remembering His goodness affected your words and choices.

Closing Prayer