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## DESENSITIZATION

Desensitize. Now that's a big word. What does it mean? It is defined "to reduce or eliminate the sensitivity of a person."

A country boy asked a city-slicker once, "Have you ever seen a pig holding his nose?" The city-slicker answered, "No, I haven't." The country boy then said, "He's been in the stench so long, he doesn't know he stinks." "Now, I've got it," said the city-slicker. Don't you love the way country folks can shuck it down where anyone can understand?

Desensitization happens when we expose ourselves to shameful things so long that we no longer respond to it as

we once did. The Bible teaches us to keep our senses keen. Our senses are to be "*exercised to discern both good and evil*" (Heb. 5:14).

We need to have discernment to make good choices and approve of things that are excellent (Phil. 1:10). But too much exposure to filth has a tendency to numb the senses. Our world is full of people who "*having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more*" (Eph. 4:19). It is possible for our consciences to become seared (1 Tim. 4:2). I'm reminded of a newly hired construction worker who hit his thumb with a hammer and doubled over in pain. His boss walked

by and said, "You know, if you'll do that every day for a while, it'll get to where it doesn't hurt anymore." He's right. All the nerves will be dead. That's desensitization.

In the days of Jeremiah, things got so bad that Jeremiah said the people did not "*know how to blush*" (Jer. 6:15). It makes me wonder – are we there? Have we lost the ability to blush at anything? Are there things that used to bother you but they don't bother you any longer? Are you watching things on television that at one time you would not have watched? Are you going places that at one time you would not visit? Are you wearing things that at one time you would not have worn? Are you more silent about things that at one time you would have spoken out against? Has your zeal for the Lord reached the "*lukewarm*" level (Rev. 3:16)?

Have we been desensitized when we ought to be holding our noses? Think about it.  
– Jim Lee

## Always Upward Gary Henry

"... but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME, LITERALLY. No matter how much we learn and are enriched by what we know, God's greatness offers still more. Our whole lifetime should be spent seeking these greater things. Coming to know our Creator more richly is, in a positive sense, life's greatest challenge. It is also our greatest joy and our greatest reward. This is what makes life worth living.

A. W. Pink observed that most Christians "expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little and are content with little." If this is a problem today, it is by no means a new problem. The writer of Hebrews found it

necessary to exhort his readers with these words: "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (Hebrews 5:12). Too few of God's people have ever grown as they should "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Arrested development is often the norm.

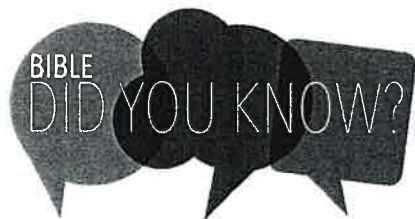
We would surely be shocked if we could see how wide the gap really is between what God knows Himself to be and what we know Him to be. But there is also quite a gap between what we know God to be and what we COULD know Him to be. We should be sorrowful when we reflect on our complacency. "God's treasure is like an infinite ocean, and yet a little wave of emotion, passing with the moment, is enough for many" (Brother Lawrence). Our desire to know our Heavenly Father is all too small.

Perhaps it is daunting to think

of the magnitude of such a thing as coming to know God. We may shrink from the very thought. But looking at it from another point of view, what could we undertake that would hold more promise? Is this not the greatest adventure, the ultimate undertaking in this otherwise disappointing world? How bracing to climb a little way up the slope and feel the air freshen, to climb even further and catch a thrilling glimpse of the distant summit! The finest qualities of our created nature are called forth when we reach upward, always upward.

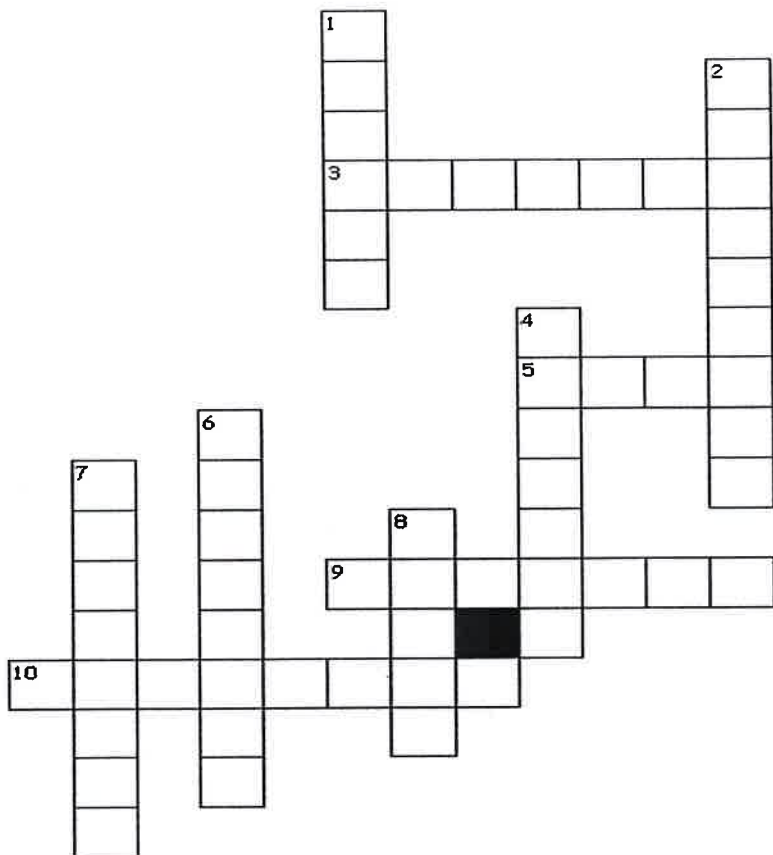
"When I am at my best the Word still towers high above me" (Bernard of Clairvaux).

Gary Henry –  
WordPoints.com



***"A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps."***  
**Prov. 29:5**

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## ACROSS

3. Though the outer man is decaying, the inner man is being \_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 4:16)
5. The letter kills, but this gives live. (2 Cor. 3:6)
9. Beyond their ability, the Macedonians gave out of deep \_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 8:2)
10. With \_\_\_\_ face we behold the glory of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)

## DOWN

1. The new covenant is not of the letter but of the \_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 3:6)
2. We must all appear before the \_\_\_\_ seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10)
4. The god of this world has done this to the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4)
6. We perfect this in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1)
7. God said light shall shine out of \_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 4:6)
8. Put a veil over his face after speaking with God (2 Cor. 3:13)