



[1 Timothy 4:2](#)

(2) speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,
New King James Version

In [1 Timothy 4:2](#), Paul speaks of people searing or cauterizing their consciences with a hot iron. Willard Gaylin writes that "the failure to feel guilt is the basic flaw in the psychopath, or antisocial person, who is capable of committing crimes of the vilest sort without remorse or contrition." We could describe the unpardonable [sin](#) as the incapacity to feel remorse or a person's determination to override every warning signal of guilt. If people repeatedly violate their consciences, masking their guilt by using escapist "analgesics," the consequences become devastating. Without the stimulus of spiritual pain, they become incapable of changing their behavior.

This seared conscience is the ultimate result of the process Paul describes in [Romans 1:28](#): "And even as they did not like to retain [God](#) in their knowledge, God gave them over [abandoned them, *Twentieth Century New Testament*] to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting." Though God desires to grant all men [repentance](#) ([II Peter 3:9](#)), a person can reach a point where it is no longer possible because, in his perversion and wickedness, he has burned his conscience to cinders.

We need to thank God for the capacity to feel both physical and spiritual pain. It provides us with the warning and the motivation to change—to be transformed into the image of our Savior [Jesus Christ](#). In accepting His [sacrifice for our sins](#), we take upon ourselves the responsibility—with God's help—to diagnose and eradicate the sins that cause the spiritual pain in the first place, to bring us into vibrant spiritual health. As the author of Hebrews writes, "Now no chastening [painful discipline] seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" ([Hebrews 12:11](#)).

— David F. Maas

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[Guilt: Our Spiritual Pain](#)

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[Conscience](#)

[Conscience , Seared](#)

[Conscience, Cauterized](#)

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