

Martial Arts & the Christian



Is It "Just Exercise?"

"Martial" means *"Of or appropriate to warfare"*, or warlike, from the Latin, "Martialis", meaning that belonging to Mars, the god of war; according to the Oxford Dictionary.

The teaching and foundational philosophy behind all Martial Arts is directly opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ. He told His followers to **"Turn the other cheek"**; and also to **"forgive them for they know not what they do"**. While Jesus could have resisted his torturers and false accusers, He fulfilled Isaiah 53:7 **"he opened not his mouth"**. According to Peter - who saw most of what was inflicted on Jesus, stated **"...when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judges righteously"**, (1 Peter 2:23). Jesus wasn't a wimp - He had total confidence that His life and purposes were in His Father's hands. It is called "trust."

What are the issues to consider?

As a Christian, there are two main questions which need to be answered about involvement in any of the items covered here. The first question is, *"Does the Lord Jesus want you involved in them"?*

The second question is *"If the Lord says He doesn't want us involved, is this something we should warn other Christians about"?*

There are some sincere Christians who feel justified in staying involved with their Martial Arts, or other practices. It isn't for me to question their commitment to Jesus Christ. Each of us will have to answer directly to Him in due time. Having said that, there are many who have been involved in various Martial Arts, Tai Ch'i, TM and Yoga, for example, and when they have seriously sought the Lord's opinion, He has convicted them to leave, and quite an number have been called to speak out or write against such involvements.

There are five main area Christians involved in these matters need to face when they seek God's views about these issues. I believe with honest soul-searching and heart examination, God will show people what He really wants for each of our lives. It is for the best.

Let us now look at these one by one.

1. Pride

Many who have been involved in these practices have developed, over time, an air of superiority over others. There can often be a self-sufficiency, due to the power and control taught and learned through these practices. Egotism and arrogance are very common problems with Martial Artists - probably more than many other people, with the possible exception of politicians. Many practitioners also idolise their Masters and Senseis, which is dangerously close to idolatry, for which God imposes judgement.

2. Violence

I have raised this issue with various Christian leaders who have ministered to people with a family history of Martial Arts involvement. All have said there has been evidence of violence in relationships, as well as passed down through family lines. Many Martial Arts techniques are seldom solely self-defensive, while most are offensive, aggressive and intended to cripple, maim or kill people. The tactics are retaliatory and intended to inflict punishment. Jesus Christ gave an example of love. Should the violent disposition in so many who practise Martial Arts, be found in Jesus' disciples?

3. Whose body is it?

For the Christian, the answer is that we are bought with the price of Calvary by Jesus Christ - we belong to Him, and we are to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to work through us for the sake of His kingdom. Many of the blocks, kicks and punches from Martial Arts can be destructive and can also cause degeneration to many functions of our bodies. The rigorous training,

sparring, breaking wooden timber and concrete blocks can, over time, bring arthritis, joint injuries and other health problems. Let's not forget the numerous bruising and even broken bones in the bodies of many Martial Artists. I question whether this is an appropriate use of our bodies we Christians know belong to God.

4. Occult Connection

There is no question about the occultic and Eastern mystical basis to most Martial Arts and the other issues being investigated here. Many commence training for self-defence, or physical exercise and discipline reasons, including sports competitions and other claimed health benefits. However, a significant number are drawn into the occultic philosophies behind these arts. In my research, I have yet to find a single Martial Art system which could sit comfortably with a Christian/Biblical world-view. Since the God of the Bible pronounces very stern judgements on those involved in the occult, (see Deut. 18:9-12; Galatians 5:20 -21), it doesn't seem to be enlightened self-interest to participate in it. We each have to answer to Him one day.

5. What is the Testimony to others?

A genuine Christian would want a testimony that doesn't become a stumbling block to others. Just as there can't be a "Christian" paedophile, or a "Christian" adulterer, or a "Christian" murderer, I haven't found any evidence to support a "Christian" Martial Artist, Tai Ch'i, TM or Yoga practitioner. The fundamental basis and philosophy behind all these is occultic. It is based in violence and has a spiritual power which at best is soulish, and at worst, probably demonic. I question what a genuine Christian would be doing in such a place. It is interesting that several of the former Martial Artists who tried to use their

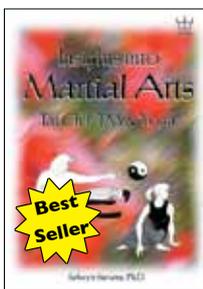
practice as a testimony for Jesus Christ, observed that far more of those they attracted got drawn to the philosophy and occult rather than to Jesus Christ. That's not good fruit. Bill Rudge, the Founder of the "Christian Martial Arts Association" states, "Even before I was a Christian, a lot of my Karate associates who started training when I did at least professed to be Christians. But few, if any, were really committed. It is interesting to note that a few years later almost everyone who had continued in the martial arts now practised yoga, meditation, or TM and some even considered themselves Zen Buddhists or Taoists". ("Why I Quit Karate" by Bill Rudge, p 5) Some belong to groups with names like "Karate for Christ" or "Judo for Jesus". The problem is that in their demonstrations in schools and churches, they have witnessed at least as much for the practice as they have for Christ. That seems like a mixed message at best. The problem seems to be not whether they are offending their own conscience, but whether they are misleading others who are ignorant of the accompanying spiritual and other related issues. As former Spiritualist medium, Ben Alexander states, "Remember, it is not karate that wins people to Christ. It can possibly have the opposite effect". ("Out of Darkness" by Ben Alexander, p 150-151)

Most Martial Arts and related fields have a senior figure called a "Master". This title may also be found in other occultic practices or organisations including Freemasonry, other secret societies and lodges, and Reiki. However, Jesus commanded that we are to call no man "master" in Matthew 23:10.

"Jesus said,
"I am the way, the truth,
and the life.

No one comes to the Father
except through Me"

(John 14:6)



"Insights into Martial Arts,
T.M., Tai Chi, & Yoga"
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**"Have nothing to do with the things of darkness,
but rather expose them."
(Ephesians 5:11)**

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