



# Character Qualities for Christian Martial Artists

By

Mark McGee



One of the aspects of Christian Martial Arts that attracts many people is our emphasis on building Character. I heard a wise teacher many years ago say that martial arts is not about becoming a better fighter, but about becoming a better person. Character is at the core of martial arts. Without character a martial artist would be little more than a skilled thug. Character shapes martial artists into strong citizens, good husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons and daughters.

Read the founding principles of most martial arts systems and you'll see the importance Character has in the art. Character traits of Honesty, Humility, Loyalty and Perseverance are paramount to the success of any martial artist. Here are some examples from the doctrine of several martial arts systems.

“Strive for the perfection of character!” “Defend the paths of truth!”  
“Foster a spirit of effort!” “Honor the principles of etiquette!” “Refrain from violent behavior!”

“Always act in a courteous manner... During training, concentrate to the limit of your mental endurance. Give your all, mentally and physically, as training without concentration prevents advancement.... The physical and mental training of Karate should be combined as one. The heart, mind and body should be in unison at all times... Heed the advice of your teacher and of more advanced students of other schools. Listen to and never forget their advice... Listening and watching are key points to advancement... In order to advance, one must strive to obtain the true

spirit of Karate... Training is on a continuous basis and one learns a little at a time. Do not take breaks in training as it will result in a step backwards... Always strive for advancement and when advanced, one must not brag or boast... Self-praise and over-confidence is a sickness that corrupts training... Refrain from over-eating, drinking and smoking, for these bad habits hinder the effectiveness of your training... Karate training has no limits. Step by step, study by study, and one day in the future you will undoubtedly enter the temple of Shaolin.”

“To gain a more profound understanding... To gain strength from our weaknesses... To become more sincere... To become more righteous... To better control our emotions... To have more peace in our homes.”

“To prohibit intentional violence... To rule the actions of the warrior... To edify... To promote virtue... To promote peace among the people... To produce harmony in society... To bring about prosperity.”

“Respect for God, Family, Friends, Country”

“Qualities – Humility, Honesty, Confidence, Courage, Strength”

“Responsibility – Sincerity – Justice”

“Be loyal to your country... Be obedient to your parents... Be loving to ones husband or wife... Be cooperative with your brothers... Be respectful to your elders... Be faithful to your teacher... Be faithful to your friends... Kill only in justice and with honor... Never retreat in battle... Always finish what you start.”

“Reverence for nature... Physical concentration... Courtesy... Modesty... Thankfulness... Self-sacrifice... Cultivate courage... Chastity... Be strong inside and mild outside... Endurance... Reading ability.”

“Purpose of training should be enhancement of the mental and physical self... Sincerity is necessary... Effort is necessary... Consistent schedule during practice... Do your best when training... Train in the basic spirit of the Art... Regularly spaced practice sessions... Obey without objection the word of instructors or seniors; look and learn... Don't be overly ambitious... Pay attention to every aspect of your training... Pay attention to the order of your training... Get instruction step by step in new forms and techniques... Try to overcome feelings of idleness... Cleanliness is desired when practice is finished.”

As Christian martial artists we know the importance of Character. God's Word emphasizes the importance of Character. The Bible gives us hundreds of real-life examples of people with good and bad character. Character became an issue early in the lives of the first family. Adam and Eve sinned against God and were banished from the Garden of Eden. Abel displayed excellent character qualities; Cain did not. Cain killed his brother because of bad character. The Bible is filled with stories of the success and failure of character. Noah was an example of good character. Abraham and Lot are examples of good and bad character. Joseph was an example of good character. Moses expressed both good and bad character. Joshua was an example of good character. Ruth was also an example of good character.

“And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.” Ruth 3:11

Job was an example of good character with the challenges of being human. David was an example of good and bad character. Read the Bible from front to back and we find everything we need to know about character. Character is something for which people should strive.

“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones.” Proverbs 12:4

“Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.”

Proverbs 31:10

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” Acts 17:11

How do we develop character? Are we born with it? Do we inherit it from our parents? Do we get it from our social standing? Is it because of the church or school we attend?

God makes it clear that character is something we develop by clear intention and expression.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:1-5

Notice the process:

- 1) Justified by faith
- 2) Peace with God through Christ
- 3) Access by faith into this Grace in which we stand
- 4) Rejoice in hope of the glory of God
- 5) Rejoice in tribulations
- 6) Knowing that tribulation produces perseverance
- 7) Perseverance produces character
- 8) Character produces hope
- 9) Hope does not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit

Character comes from having a right relationship with God through faith in Christ followed by a rejoicing in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance and perseverance produces character. Character produces hope. What does our world need? Hope. That hope comes from character which is developed by persevering through suffering. These precious Words written by the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit give us a fresh perspective on dealing with the challenges of living in this world.

These are some of the Character Qualities emphasized during Grace Martial Arts classes:

- Respect
- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Enthusiasm
- Endurance
- Thankfulness
- Hope
- Responsibility
- Self Control
- Upright Behavior
- Godliness
- Discretion
- Tolerance
- Creativity
- Diligence
- Courage
- Strength
- Loyalty
- Truthfulness
- Orderliness
- Virtue
- Responsibility

- Patience
- Perseverance
- Sensitivity
- Balance
- Attentiveness
- Obedience
- Respect
- Humility
- Honesty
- Confidence
- Honor
- Faith
- Spiritual Power

We invite you and your family to become part of a Christian Martial Arts program.

Grace Martial Arts ©

“Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”