



What Makes Christian Martial Arts Different?

By

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Martial Arts
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Many people wonder about the difference between “martial arts” and “Christian martial arts.” Great question!

Martial arts classes usually begin with a time of meditation (or personal reflection), followed by a demonstration of respect by students to their teacher and by teacher to students. We like to say that every class begins and ends with respect.

Christian martial arts classes begin and end with prayer to God in the Name of Jesus Christ. We like to say that the demonstration of respect begins with the highest ranking person in the room ... Jesus Christ. We address our Lord and Savior in prayer with bowed posture first. Demonstration of respect for teacher and students follows.

That’s just the starting place. “Christian” martial arts is more than just saying a prayer at the beginning and end of each class. The “truth” of Jesus Christ is a primary lesson throughout every class. The goal of each class is to present the truth of Christ in a way that glorifies Christ, edifies Christians and presents the “good news” of salvation to those in need. We do that through a combination of memorizing Scripture together and sharing insights to Christian truths while learning martial arts skills.

A Christian martial arts class will have a similar look and sound with other martial arts classes (e.g. warm-up exercises, shouting during waza, kata, throwing partners to the mat during self-defense practice, etc), with one unique difference. We have a special emphasis on developing the “character of Christ,” based on what the Bible reveals to us about Jesus Christ and building godly character as His followers.

Here are some examples of those character qualities (the first 20 out of 78 in alphabetical order).

Definitions of Christian Character Qualities

“...be conformed to the image of God’s Son” (Romans 8:29)

Much emphasis is placed on superficial appearances and life style even among Christians. God warned Samuel about this in selecting a king for Israel. He said, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature... for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

God desires that true Christians develop godly character – the character of Christ. Once a person believes that Jesus Christ is his/her Savior, that person should have a compelling desire to be like Christ. To become like Him means that one needs to know Him. The following characteristics are provided to help one to learn Biblical Godly, Christ-like qualities.

1. Agreeableness... Finding a biblical decision, solution, or proposal acceptable enough that I can support and others would not oppose. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3)
2. Alertness... Using my physical and spiritual senses to recognize and respond to dangers biblically. “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)
3. Appreciation ... Giving God and others genuine compliments for their importance and value to me. “...Take delight in honoring each other.” (Romans 12:10 NLT)
4. Attentiveness ... Acknowledging the worth of a person by giving total concentration to his words. “...We must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.” (Heb 2:1 NLT)
5. Availability ... Making my own schedule and priorities secondary to the wishes of those I am serving. “...Immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia.” (Acts 16:10)
6. Boldness ... Speaking the truth and doing the right thing regardless of the consequences. “We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 13:6)
7. Cautiousness ... Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions. “Zeal without knowledge is not good; a person who moves too quickly may go the wrong way.” (Proverbs 19:2)
8. Christian Character ... Reflecting the qualities and traits of Christ in my life. “...Be conformed to the image of [God’s] Son.” (Romans 8:29)

9. Commitment ... Pledging to guard and fulfill that which has been entrusted to me. "Guard that which is committed to thy trust." (1 Timothy 6:20)
10. Communication ... The process of conveying my thoughts, attitudes and actions to another in a manner that reflects Christ. "Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT).
11. Compassion ... The feelings aroused by the distress or misfortune of others that moves me to meet their needs. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him." (Mark 1:41)
12. Convictions ... Purposing to follow the commands of Scripture, whatever the cost. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." (Daniel 1:8)
13. Confidence ... Relying on the Lord to enable me in every area of my life. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)
14. Counsel ... Helping a friend to apply the ways of God in a difficult situation. "The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense." (Proverbs 27:9 NLT)
15. Courage ... The ability to act on the knowledge that He who is in me is greater than he who is against me. "Ye are of God... and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)
16. Creativity ... Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective. "Intelligent people are always open to new ideas. In fact, they look for them." (Proverbs 18:15 NLT)

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17. Decisiveness ... The ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the truths of God's Word. "I have chosen the way of truth; thine ordinances have I laid before me." (Psalms 119:30)
18. Deference ... Limiting my freedom so I do not offend the tastes of others. "It is not good to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles." (Romans 14:21)
19. Dependability ... Completing a commitment even if it means personal sacrifice. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)
20. Determination ... Purposing to accomplish God's goals in God's time regardless of the opposition."I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

[From the Grace Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide]

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