



YON CH'UAN MARTIAL ARTS

Testing For Black Belt

By

Mark McGee

Several of our Brown Belts (*Ikkyu*) are currently training to test for their Yon Ch'uan Black Belt in a couple of months. We use the [Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide](#) during training because it contains the core curriculum for both the martial and spiritual aspects of Grace Martial Arts.

As we read in the Black Belt Study Guide –

“Belt advancement will be based on good self-defense, control, speed, balance, discipline, safety awareness and higher skill proficiency on all previously learned techniques. Scripture memory is a significant part of the student’s belt advancement.”

A primary Scripture for training to test for Black Belt is 2 Timothy 2:1-5 —

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.”

Notice the last five words – “competes according to the rules.” The rules are what make martial arts a powerful and compassionate system of self defense. Competing “according to the rules” is what makes martial artists great people to know. Notice that the Apostle Paul wrote his student,

Timothy, that anyone who does not compete according to the rules “is not crowned.” Black Belts should be awarded to those students who have competed according to the rules. Martial artists who compete according to the rules will most likely “play” by the rules when it comes to using their skills.

Training and testing for Black Belt is hard – and it should be. As a rule of thumb there is usually five years at a minimum of hard work and routine practice that precedes testing for Black Belt.

What should a Brown Belt testing for Black Belt expect?

“Most importantly you will be expected to perform FROM your acceptance and absolutely not FOR your acceptance. Expect our art — which is to say, expect the unexpected! Know your basics flawlessly! Be familiar with basic terminology that will assist you with identification of specific required skills. More importantly, you will NOT be expected to know perfectly everything written on the STUDENT BLACK BELT SELF-DEFENSE EVALUATION GUIDE. That in actuality would be nearly impossible! You should however have a very firm, powerful grasp of all the basic skills, along with a firm grasp of a wide variety of advanced skill strengths that are unique to your physical personality and makeup. You will be physically and emotionally challenged to achieve your maximum potential. You will be required to defend yourself non-stop for at least five minutes with a wide varieties of self-defense skills with six to eight students simultaneously attacking you. Sounds impossible! You will be astonished with the skill abilities that Yon Ch’uan Martial Arts

provides you with when you are sincerely tested! Expect to be asked to teach. Expect to defend yourself both physically and verbally as well. Expect to make mistakes. Expect to be disappointed by some of your performance and very proud of yourself as well.” Yon Ch’uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide

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The best system of self defense is the one that **works** in a real-life situation. If it doesn't work, why learn it?

Our students begin learning self defense in a careful system that emphasizes economy of motion, efficiency of technique, and safety for all involved. As students become more proficient in their abilities, their skills are tested with speed, accuracy and power of technique against one partner. As students are able to defeat a partner in 2 seconds or less, the challenge becomes how to defeat two partners in 3-4 seconds total, three partners in 5-6 seconds total, four partners in 7-8 total seconds, etc. The Black Belt test in Yon Ch'uan includes defending against multiple partners over a period of several minutes.

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This accomplishes at least two things for the testing martial artists –

1. They demonstrate their ability to move naturally and quickly through a series of self-defense techniques that demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency.
2. They are rewarded with increased self confidence in their ability to defend effectively and efficiently against multiple attackers.

“Have no doubt that your evaluation for Black Belt will be difficult! For it is the nature of developing excellence! However, it is not the real test of the Yon Ch’uan Black Belt. The real test is the years you have devoted to firstly acquire Christ-Defense, together with relational, Biblical life-skills. Secondly, you have acquired Mental-Defense that has built Godly character, confidence and strengthened disciplined direction for your life and education. Thirdly, you have acquired Physical-Defense with a maximum efficiency of self-defense skills and advanced kinetic movement principles for optimal health, well-being and self-defense.”

Yon Ch’uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide

Yon Ch’uan has a fascinating history with both Chinese and Japanese martial arts as major parts of its foundation. Grand Master John Chung Li, who brought the art of Hwa Yu T’ai Chi Ch’uan to the United States from China and was Grand Master Robert Xavier’s teacher, wrote this about our martial art – most helpful to remember as we deal with multiple attackers –

“All movement is in strict line with gravity. Movement is light and lively, expressed with your own will. The heightened awareness and sensitivity to feeling movement is deeply profound. You learn to always know your opponent’s intentions without his knowing yours. Your movements are like a flowing river. Extreme softness will develop extreme strength. Your calmness within movement is as a mountain. You learn to turn your spirit to stillness, humility and emptiness. The enjoyment and awareness of movement of life is greatly heightened.” John Chung Li, Hwa Yu T'ai Chi Ch'uan

People who don't understand the true nature and purpose of martial arts often think of it as training to fight, but that's far from true. The true purpose of martial arts is to "stop conflict."



The Chinese character "wu" that is translated "martial" means "stop sword, end violence, stop fighting." It carries the idea of the *right use* of arms or strength. The primary goal is to *stop conflict*, not cause it.

The "art" part of "martial arts" deals with the creative side of stopping conflict. It includes all of the disciplines needed to do it well.

The Black Belt test brings us to both sides of "martial arts" –

Resolving Conflicts Non-Violently

"The Yon Ch'uan training focuses on mental defense, resolving conflicts nonviolently while promoting physical, emotional and spiritual well being. Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts training offers youth programs of instruction designed to foster cooperation and personal growth. The youth training program and the confidence it inspires develops skills to resolve conflicts

peacefully. In addition to actual martial arts techniques the program teaches children, young people and adults how to stop both physical and verbal confrontations before they happen. The training provides young people with a unique opportunity for social exchange and teaches each participant how to attain immense, internal energy, eventually reaching the full limits of their organic, psychomotor, cognitive and effective development, according to individual ability.” [The Yon Ch’uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide](#)

The goal of all techniques in Yon Ch’uan Martial Arts is *resolving conflicts non-violently*. We have no desire to fight or cause anyone harm, but we will defend ourselves with speed, power and accuracy. That’s the ‘art’ part of Yon Ch’uan.

“Yon Ch’uan Three Zone Defense training brings out in young people the qualities of humility, honesty, confidence, courage, strength and truthfulness. None of the youth defense training programs can be used offensively. (Example: a headlock or front choke escape skill can only be used for defense) It is of paramount importance that a beginning student first develop God-confidence and learn alternatives to using force to dissuade a potential physical encounter. The Three Zone Defense youth instruction combines many of the very best martial art sport skills that can NEVER be utilized in any offensive combative fashion. These skills combine the very best principles of sport Judo throws and hold downs. Also many principles of Aikido escapes, constraint and submission skills are taught to a beginner student to avoid teaching them any dangerous combative skills that could be used offensively by an impulse-ridden

beginning student. The student's safety is always highly assured. This youth character training encourages self-discipline and a non-violent attitude and teaches that "rudeness is a weak person's imitation of strength." The Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide

Two of the 'Self Defense' aspects taught to students of Yon Ch'uan Martial arts are:

- Situational Awareness
- Situational Advantage

Situational Awareness

The first step of self defense is **situational awareness**. We need to be aware of our situation at all times: location, environmental elements, time of day, who is close enough to you to be a possible threat, etc. I think of it as having our "radar up." It means using all of your God-given senses to assess your safety at all times. It's engaging mind, body and spirit.

Here's how we explained the importance of awareness in one of our martial arts e-books –

"The best way to prepare yourself for real self-defense is to train for real. You could be attacked at anytime, anywhere, by anyone. That's reality. The FBI reports that almost 1.4 million violent crimes occur in the United States every year. More than 60% of the crimes reported to law enforcement are assaults. Robbery accounts for more than 30%. Forcible rape accounts for more than 6%. Many people across our country are being attacked right now as you read this. Many of them will be surprised by the attack. Most people don't think it will happen to them, so they never prepare to deal with a serious physical assault."

[Martial Arts – The Real Path To Self Defense](#)

Students of Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts are learning some of the best concepts and methods for self defense –

“The key to developing powerful, versatile, effective, self-defense abilities is to understand the internal principles of the six combinations and eight methods. The routine practice of the Yon Ch'uan 15-Animal Kung Fu forms will provide you with awesome awareness and understanding of whole body connectivity. Every aspect of your martial arts capability will improve, including Judo throwing, weapon training and your self-defense abilities.” [Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide](#)

Harmonies of the Five Hearts of Movement Awareness

Being *situationally aware* means knowing how to use your body in the best way to accomplish the goal of self defense.

“The five hearts are the centers of the two feet (the center point of the arch), the center of the two palms and the center of the top of the head. You must have the feeling of these five points working in unison with the body and joints. Then you will feel strong, balanced and confident in your new movement vocabulary. When you have the benefits of awareness of these five harmonies, then you will have a heightened ability of understanding the Six Combinations Eight Methods principles. You won't need to focus on technique or anything else, just react according to the specific situation. The real meaning of technique is to move without conscience thought.” [Black Belt Study Guide](#)

Situational Advantage

Being situationally aware gives us the important situational advantage to use the Three C's of Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts –

“Comprehensive self-defense emphasis must be placed on “contact” with an opponent, and then redirection of the opponent’s force with “control” and “counter” along with appropriate self-defense skills. Movement centered from your mid-line increases speed, power and intuitive awareness of your opponent’s body position. When a student is comfortable with their mid-line yielding and clearing movement they will soon be able to control and counter without hesitation.

Conscious action is extremely slow and cumbersome. Unconscious action is startling fast and effective. Focusing primarily on the whole body sinking and clearing the mid- line eliminates the visual and mental business of the mind, which impedes speed and good martial arts skill level. Slow, even, smooth practice both with the eyes open or closed and the use of a blindfold will also enhance the feel of movement centering. Feel the contact, then interrupt with control and counter with an effective skill.” Black Belt Study Guide

Students learn three forms of defense in Grace Martial Arts classes –

- Firstly, students acquire Christ-Defense, together with relational, Biblical life-skills. Our challenge is to lead students to know the Lord and His Word so well that they will readily employ Biblical principles and will make wise lifestyle choices.
- Secondly, students acquire Mental-Defense that builds Godly character and confidence and strengthens disciplined direction for student's lives and education.
- Thirdly, students acquire Physical-Defense with a maximum efficiency of self-defense skill and advanced kinetic movement principles for optimal health and well-being. (*Yon C'huan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide With Scriptures*)

The Word of God is of the **highest importance** in training for a Black Belt in Grace Martial Arts classes. Our Black Belts instruct students physically, mentally and spiritually.

Grace Martial Arts teaches Christian family values, directly related to Biblical principles. Our Black Belt instructors accomplish that by teaching Christian Bible lessons throughout students' training, helping students memorize Bible verses, and emphasizing the importance of becoming "like Christ" through Christian Character training.

Each belt rank includes Scripture memory verses and Christian Character Qualities. Here are some examples –

- 10th Kyu (Ju-kyu) – White Belt – 1 John 14:6; John 3:16; Romans 3:23 ... Character Qualities: Humility, Honesty, Confidence
- 9th Kyu (Ku-kyu) – Gold Belt – 1-Cor. 15:3-4; 1-John 5:13; Eph. 1:13 ... Character Qualities: Discipline, Forgiving, Fellowship
- 4th Kyu (Go-kyu) – Green Belt – John 13:34-35; 1-John 3:18; Colossian 3:23-24 ... Character Qualities: Reverent Spirit, Servant-Leader, Farsighted
- 1st Kyu (Ni-kyu) – Brown Belt – 1 – Titus 2:11-12; 1-Corinthians 13:4-6; Philippians 4:8 ... Character Qualities: Enthusiasm, Fearless, Flexibility

You can read all of the spiritual requirements for Black Belt [here](#).

Grace Martial Arts has 78 specific Christian Character Qualities based on the Apostle Paul's entreaty that we "become 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." [Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts Black Belt Study Guide With Scriptures](#)

Here are some examples of Christian Character Qualities from the Black Belt Study Guide (in alphabetical order) –

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?”(Amos3:3)

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)

We invite you to read more about the 78 Christian Character Qualities [here](#).

Testing for Black Belt includes many aspects of the particular art for which you are testing. The primary martial art for Grace Martial Arts is Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts.

Testing Includes

History of Yon Ch'uan and Grace Martial Arts

Meaning of Christian Self Defense

Realistic Self Defense

Yon Ch'uan Principles & Practice

Scripture Memory

Rank Requirements for 10th - 1st Kyu (Kihon, Kata, Kumite)

Rank Requirements for 1st Dan (Kihon, Kata, Kumite)

15 Animal Kung Fu Requirements (Forms and Defense)

Resolving Conflicts Nonviolently

Christian Character Qualities

Put Off - Put On

Principles of Evangelism

Ability to Teach Others

Put Off

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” Ephesians 4:22

Here are some examples of what Christians should "put off."

Lack of love..... I John 4:7,8,20

Judging..... Matthew 7:1.2

Bitterness..... Hebrews 12:15

Unforgiving spirit..... Mark 11:26

Selfishness..... Philippians 2:21

[Black Belt candidates learn almost 70 examples for "put off" from the Bible.]

Put On

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:14

Here are some examples of what Christians should "put on" -

Love..... John 15:12

Let God search my heart..... John 8:9; 15:22

Tender hearted and forgiving..... Ephesians 4:32

Self denial..... John 12:24

Humility..... James 4:6

[Black Belt candidates learn almost 70 examples for "put on" from the Bible.]

Principles of Evangelism

We believe it is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), knowing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Part of Black Belt training in Grace Martial Arts is sharing the Gospel of Christ with people who need to hear of God's eternal love for them.

We Invite You

If you are interested in learning more about Grace Martial Arts, please contact Sensei Mark McGee at gracemartialarts1@gmail.com.

† PURPOSE †

Our ministry purpose is to provide a Christ-centered, easy-to-do, therapeutic, restorative healthcare activity that will assist a person to reach his/her optimal affective, cognitive, psychomotor and spiritual potential.



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