

“Is It OK for a Christian to Train in Martial Arts?”

I want to ask a question about a Christian's involvement with martial arts and how it relates to a Christian who has a career in law enforcement.

Christians are warned not to be involved with martial arts because they lead people into conversion of eastern religions. But many who train as police or as a security guard etc. may find it handy or essential and may have to train in martial arts whether they want to or not.

What should a Christian do who may be in this situation?

Thanks so much for your question. Interestingly, Pat Zukeran, one of my colleagues here at Probe trains in martial arts! He has written an article on this topic [entitled Martial Arts](#). We discussed this question together and came to a similar conclusion.

In our opinion, a distinction should be made between the physical training and exercise required in martial arts and the philosophical and religious ideas which may sometimes be associated with such training.

Paul does warn believers in Colossians 2:8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Thus, one must be wary of some of the eastern philosophical and religious concepts which might be promoted in the martial arts. It is not wrong to know and understand these concepts, but you do not want to be taken captive and led away from Christ by them.”

On the other hand, the sort of physical training required in

the martial arts is doubtless a very good thing. It not only leads to such benefits as a stronger body, greater flexibility, faster reflexes, and greater dexterity, it also leads to increased confidence in one's ability to handle potentially dangerous situations. And all of these benefits can be of enormous value to those involved in law enforcement and security work. Indeed, such training may help save lives—not only of those who receive it, but also of those they are attempting to apprehend.

Thus, my own view (and the view of my colleague) is this. There is nothing wrong with a Christian learning martial arts, especially for purposes of self-defense and increased effectiveness in law enforcement. As long as one is careful to separate the non-Christian philosophical and religious ideas from the actual physical training—rejecting the false ideas, but embracing the benefits of the physical training—there does not seem to be any harm in a Christian learning martial arts.

I hope this helps and I wish you all the best,

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