

MARTIAL ARTS

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I'm going to read the first two verses in Romans chapter 12 to begin our message this morning. Now, let me just say this. I know that nobody in this church has a problem with this topic, but I'd be happy to debate this subject as long as it's debated on a scriptural basis. Some of our related sermons in the last five or six years would be *Nonresistance, War, The Atrocities of War, War No More, Sports, The Olympics, Football, Entertainment*, and *The Early Church Beliefs and Practices*. Those are just a few sermons that would be related to what we're looking at this morning.

God says in Romans 12:1 and 2 through the handwriting of the Apostle Paul: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Father, we thank You for this day. We thank You, Lord, for Your Word. We just pray this morning that you speak to our hearts. Help us as we look into the Scripture and as we look into this subject. And Lord, we just pray, now, for your anointing and blessing to be upon the reading of Scripture. And, Lord, we just thank You for loving us. We thank You for giving us the privilege to assemble together here today, for it's in Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.

I preach about ten messages a year on some things that you don't hear much about, but they're important things and they are things that the Scriptures do address. Many of the sermons I mentioned a moment ago also have articles — the one on *Sports* and *The Olympics* and different subjects like that. I'm not going to call these out from the pulpit, but I have several resources, so if anybody wants to pursue this, I can give you a lot of really good material whereby you can search these things out and know whether they're so or not.

Five years ago I was preaching a message. I can't even tell you the title of the message, but I got off for just a few moments on the subject of martial arts. I got a phone call from the West Coast, and a man wanted to debate with me over the subject. We spent some time together on the phone. He hung up, and about a week later he called me back and told me, "I'm getting rid of all the medals and belts and uniforms and all those things." He had been an instructor and had been involved in the martial arts for over 50 years, and he said to me, "You're right." I never did pursue it to ask him if he did get rid of those things. It really didn't

matter to me. But I have dealt with this subject in the past, not only just five years ago but even before that.

One of the reasons I want to begin in Romans chapter 12 is because it speaks of presenting our body as a living sacrifice. It also speaks of the renewing of our mind and not being conformed to the world, and it speaks of the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. So this is a good place to start for any sermon but especially for our sermon today.

Now, I'm going to make mention a little bit later of a few of the martial arts. There are many variations and styles and names, but I'm just going to mention a few. The two that I'm going to focus in on mostly would be karate and taekwondo because I have been associated with them over the years. When I was in the navy and also the army, in my ten years of service, I had a little bit of a connection with karate and taekwondo. I've even sparred with a couple of experts, and you know how that turned out. But, anyway, I'm a little bit familiar with those two more than I am anything else that we could consider this morning.

When we talk about the martial arts, keep in mind that the martial arts did not originate in the church of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, they are diametrically opposed to Jesus Christ and Christianity. They are not compatible in any way. Martial arts is much more than exercise or science and techniques. I believe some of the arguments today are very shallow. We seem to have a tendency to Christianize everything today. For instance, there's Christian rock, and you and I know there is no such thing. There's Christian tattoos. There's Christian sports. I even heard a few years ago of Christian prostitution, Christian cigarettes and drugs, Christian astrology and on and on and on.

There are many local instructors in all of the martial arts, especially in America, that are not Hindu or Buddhist or whatever, and they will try to argue the fact that, "Well, I'm a Christian and I'm an instructor, and I'm involved in the martial arts, so it must be okay." Well, that same argument is used when it comes to Freemasonry. I know of Masonic Lodges in this county and in this state that have a Bible on the altar, but if you go to Atlanta, you can find the Koran and the Bible and anything else on those altars. In other words, the Masonic Lodge is evil and wicked. It doesn't matter what you say about it. You can join it and carry your Bible in there, but it's still evil and wicked. And the same is true with martial arts. Some say, "Well, the devil stole the martial arts and we need to get it back," just like they do with astrology and the supposed gospel in the stars and all those kinds of things. Well, I wish Christians would approach the Bible and reproach these kinds of issues, but they would rather be safe than sorry. Do you understand what I'm saying? I wish we would approach things that way. In other words, I'd rather be safe than sorry, but that's not the way it is many times. And I'm going to tell you right now that if you enjoy seeing someone get hit or kicked or

knocked down, you need to get saved. If you enjoy that, you need to be born again. I heard a preacher say not long ago that he loved to watch cage fighting and boxing. That's the mixed martial arts. I'm not going to touch that this morning because if you don't know that's wicked, you truly need to get saved. So we're dealing with just simply martial arts this morning.

This ought to be a four-part series. I want to do it in one sermon if I can. But I have many testimonies. I have a testimony here that was sent to me last month from a man in Tennessee who was involved in the martial arts. He listens to us on line. He heard me say I was going to preach on this. He said that he was heavily involved in the martial arts in the mid-1980s during the Ninja craze, and he said that his parents didn't know any better. They put him in there at ten years of age, and he said it basically destroyed his whole thinking, his mindset, led him into meditation and mysticism until he was converted at age 27 and came out of the martial arts.

I have the CDs and articles by another man that made a living in martial arts for many years. His name is Eric Wilson, and when he was converted, he came out of it and began producing videos and CDs and books against the martial arts. Another man has a two-hour sermon, and when he was a child, he was placed in taekwondo by his parents, and he was converted later on and got away from that.

I've got the names of several ministers here, but there's one in particular that I want to focus on. I have his web page and interview on video if anybody wants it. He was a highly ranked instructor in karate, and he's written a book on martial arts and yoga, and now he's a speaker. The book is titled *Shocking Secrets Behind Martial Arts and Yoga*, and when he was converted, he burned everything — his trophies, his medals and everything. He was a Master status, 5th Degree Black Belt in martial arts. He won five National titles and five gold medals. He taught in four universities, trained law enforcement, had his own dojo. He made a good living in the martial arts, and he got saved. See, that messes everything up — doesn't it? — when it comes to the world? He got saved and born again — and gloriously born again, let me say, radically born again, truly born again, and when he got saved, he had to quit. He said his Christian faith did not line up with what went on in the ring, for his desire was not to embrace his opponent as the Scriptures say but to destroy his opponent. After he had gotten saved, he was at a tournament with some children that he had been training, and he said that he saw the faces and looked into the eyes of the kids as they were sparring with one another, and he said the Lord spoke to him and said, "Is this what you want?" And he got up and stopped the match and asked the audience, "Is this what you want for your children?" And he quit and got out of it within a matter of months after he was converted, and he said, as

well as Eric Wilson the other fellow, "I will not use my training in the martial arts to defend myself ever." He said, "I will trust in the power of God."

A lot of people say, "Well, I'm just doing it for self-defense." But notice our text again, Romans 12:1 and 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." These verses are dealing with our body and with our mind. That's the reason I'm going to give you this outline, because I'm talking about the trinity of martial arts:

I. Martial arts are based on war and violence. That has to do with the body, the physical training.

II. Martial arts create a prideful disposition. That has to do with the mind, mental training.

III. Martial arts are rooted in false religions. That has to do with the spirit, in other words, spiritual training.

I had already settled on this outline, and then I found an article that was very intriguing to me because it's titled "The Trinity of Martial Arts," and it said that "the philosophy of martial arts is to develop the body, mind, and spirit." This is only a partial quote: "In other words, to be balanced as a martial artist, this unity and harmony of these three create a total person and eventually create a Master." In other words, when we talk about the body, we're talking about it being developed through physical training — much exercise, training to give you strength, endurance and power and physical ability. Literally hours of training goes into martial arts — literally hours of training usually on a weekly basis. Then the mind is developed through mental training, and this includes meditation, which becomes one of the most important parts of the students' training so they can focus their mind and coordination. I'm going to talk a little bit about meditation if we have time later, but the mind must be trained through teaching, techniques, science, history and so forth. And then this article said it's developed through spiritual training: "The goal is personal improvement through a firm foundation of beliefs to guide the student throughout life." And then it says, "This includes codes of conduct, virtues, tenets to live by." And here's a quote from this article. Talking about the body, mind, and spirit, the article says, "Together they form the foundation of all Korean martial arts philosophy." So I believe I'm settled on a good outline this morning.

Now, in our text, we find in verse 1 that we're to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* And then verse 2 says, "**And be**

not conformed to this world . . ." James 4:4 says that you cannot be a friend of the world and be a friend of God, and he says, "but be ye transformed" — that is, to be changed — "by the renewing" — notice — "of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." A week or so ago I preached on the will of God. We need to know what the will of God is. So we're looking at the physical aspect, the mental aspect, and also the spiritual aspect of training when it comes to martial arts.

Notice with me that even Romans chapter 13 tells us in the latter part of verse 12, ". . . let us put on the armour of light," and then verse 14 says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." In chapter 12 we read in verse 14, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not," and in verses 17 through 21 it says, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. ²¹Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

You don't need anything else this morning to know that this whole concept in the martial arts is wicked and it's out of Hell. Now, Hollywood, back especially in the eighties, popularized this whole concept of martial arts in America. Back in 1971 there was a movie, *Billy Jack*. I never saw any of these movies that I'm going to mention to you, but I know what they were about. Then later you had *Karate Kid*, *Karate Girl*, *Texas Rangers* starring Chuck Norris; *Enter the Dragon*, Bruce Lee; *Ninja Turtles*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *The Power Rangers*, and I don't know whether it's true or not, but I've read that Luke Skywalker and *Star Wars* and all of that popularized some of these things — and especially the concept of "The Force," which has to do with Eastern mysticism.

So we're going to consider the body, the mind, and the spirit. All three have to be trained in martial arts, and when it comes to the child of God, all three are important in being obedient to the things of God. Now, as I said a moment ago, there are different types of martial arts. There's judo, jiu-jitsu, kung fu, karate, taekwondo. There are many others, and they all are very similar. They all have the same roots even though there are different styles and different variations. They are a Trojan horse in the Christian home and in the church and also in America. This has brought Eastern mysticism into our country.

Now, not only has Hollywood popularized the martial arts, but we find them in the church and businesses and schools and in the military. The army and marines now train in the martial arts. Years ago, my first, second, or third year here in Mobile 23, 24, 25, 26 years

ago, there was a performance in Mobile that called themselves "The Power Team," and I believe they're still doing these things. They would break bricks and blocks and boards and ball bats, tear phone books in two, bend rebar and bend horse shoes. And they put on this big show, and then there would be hundreds that said they got saved. Well, Scott Walker is one of the testimonies I have here. He said this happened in his church too, and all those who said they got saved you never saw again. Isn't that usually what happens with most of this stuff?

It's even at Bob Jones University. I've got an article laying here from 1992, and there's a picture of a karate team, "Champions for Christ," also the Christian Martial Arts Association. Then there's a documentary to teach people how to love Christ and love others. It's titled "Anointed Fighting Christians." Also, Jimmy Swaggart has a martial arts center in his campus ministry there in Louisiana. So not only businesses, but thousands of churches across America have opened their doors to the martial arts — thousands of them across our land and, yes, our county as well. Can you picture Jesus and the apostles flying through the air kicking and yelling and screaming and busting bricks and blocks and all these kinds of things? Well, I'm going to tell you something. Jesus never trained His disciples to fight in the physical world. He never trained His disciples to do any of these kinds of things. This is not something that is to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. This is one of the fastest growing industries, millions upon millions in at least 140 countries. It's a combination between magic and violence. Again, there are dojos all over America.

Now let's get into our outline.

I. MARTIAL ARTS ARE BASED ON WAR AND VIOLENCE

Our first point in the trinity of martial arts is that martial arts are based on war and violence, in other words, training the body the art of war. It's a combative form of fighting centered around techniques of warfare. The term "martial arts" denotes the art of war and is derived from Mars, the ancient Roman god of war. That's where the name is supposed to have come from. The title itself presupposes war and violence. So the spirit of martial arts is taken from the god of war.

We've read 1 Peter 2:21 many times; we've preached on it and we've written on it, and it says, "[For even hereunto were ye called](#)" — that is, to suffer, the context is suffering — and Peter said, "[because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.](#)" The context is dealing with suffering. Martial arts are based upon war and violence, and that is not New Testament teaching. Even in ancient times there was a Greek martial arts to mark the end of the Olympics with wrestling and boxing. Wrestling and boxing fit in the

same category with martial arts. It's trying to hurt somebody else, trying to knock them down, trying to win a battle over them, and this can nowhere be found in the Christian concept.

Martial arts have to do with a warrior spirit. They refer to themselves sometimes as "human weapons." It's the survival of the fittest. It's kicking and hitting or whatever else you can do to bring your opponent down. It's aggression. As a matter of fact, one writer says that it's aggression and that aggression will develop for defense and eventually goes into offense. You can't have the one without the other. You can't defend without eventually trying to take out the opponent. That's what it's all about.

In 1 Peter 2:21 Jesus Christ is our example. And, by the way, my enemy and my defense is given clearly to me in 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 5 through 11. Those verses show us clearly that the devil is as a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour, and the only way to resist him is through drawing nigh unto God with humility. The context tells us to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God and that He will exalt us in due time. We're to trust the Lord. And you know yourselves that it's not being a man to swing back a fist. Any child can do that. Any little bitty child can slap back or hit back. They do it all the time. So we know that that's not a sign of bravery and that's not a sign of manhood or womanhood.

Do you know who my hero is? It's not Bruce Lee or Chuck Norris. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the apostles and the martyrs. They are the brave ones, like when Stephen stood before the nation of Israel right before they stoned him and spoke the truth, whereby the apostle Paul, whose name was Saul at that time, later got saved. Those are my heroes. My hero is Jesus Christ. He stood before the court systems and declared the truth of Heaven and Hell. The apostle Paul and Peter and James stood before the magistrates and those who wanted to kill them, and they spoke for the truth in the power of God. Those are my heroes. Jesus Christ is my example, and I am to follow Him. Jesus taught and practiced nonviolence. This is clear. Show me a verse for otherwise.

Now, I want you to notice that Jesus committed Himself to the Father. To trust is more honorable than fighting back. First Peter chapter 2, verse 23, is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ: "*Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him*" — that is, the Father — "*that judgeth righteously.*" When the Lord Jesus Christ was reviled and threatened and spit upon and so forth, do you know what He did? He trusted God. And that's why He says in Matthew 11:28 and 29, "Learn of me." He talks about Himself as being meek and lowly and humble, and He says, "Learn of me."

The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:10 to "*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,*" and in verse 11 he says, "*Put on the whole armour of God,*" and that's something

worthy of our study. You see, Jesus never trained His disciples in martial arts or war or even self-defense, as far as that's concerned, nor did the apostles train the church in that way. We have the teachings of Jesus written down for us through the handwriting of the apostles, and the Bible says in Ephesians 2 that we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. As a matter of fact, from Jesus' early teachings in the Sermon on the Mount to His last teachings to John in the book of Revelation, we'll find that He lifted up a higher standard for His followers than what the world goes by. One of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 says to be peacemakers. We're to be merciful, meek, pure, poor in spirit. Jesus said in verses 11 and 12 to bless them when you're reviled and persecuted, rejoice and bless them. He said in verses 21 through 26 not to hate. Hatred is forbidden. Jesus said in verse 39 to resist not evil and to turn the other cheek, and in verse 44 He said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." In Matthew chapter 7, verse 12, is the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Jesus Christ did not have a fighting attitude. He did not demand His rights. He came here for a purpose — to serve the Father. He was pleasing unto the Father.

In the first two or three hundred years of the early church, you could not join a church if you went to the theaters or you were an actor or you were a gladiator or a wrestler or a fighter or if you were a chariot racer, and the circus back then was the chariot races. You couldn't join a church and be baptized and come to the Lord's Table if you participated in any of those worldly things.

In Luke 22:36 Jesus told His disciples to buy a sword. There were eleven or twelve disciples there at that time, and in verse 38 they told Jesus that they had two swords, and Jesus said that two swords were sufficient. But that is not sufficient for self-defense, so that argument doesn't hold up either. You see, what I'm trying to get across to you is that if we will walk in the power of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit, then we will have our defense, and if it's time to be martyred, we'll be martyred. If it's time to defeat our enemy, we will defeat our enemy.

Our power is in God. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Over and over the Bible speaks of God's protection and God's power and His presence, and I have seen this work many times, even since I have been preaching. I've had guns pulled on me; I've been threatened, and I've seen God intervene and just bless and take the fight out of the other individual. By the way, if you want some excitement in life, become a preacher. Somebody said, "I want to do something exciting in life, something that's dangerous." Become a preacher. I mean, there's some wonderful excitement in it. One time three men in the parking

lot of the church threatened to kill me, and one was carrying a 357, and I walked out and did a parade rest. If you don't know what that is, it's putting your hands behind your back. And I said, "I'm a Christian. I'm a preacher. I don't settle disputes this way." I said, "Do what you need to do." And they couldn't do anything.

Also, a little over ten years ago, there was a black lady backing out of a parking lot in Mobile, and a white guy came in and hit her. She didn't see him. It didn't hurt either vehicle. My wife and I were getting out of our vehicle and we saw the whole thing. And the guy got out of his vehicle and started cussing and went after her. I started praying, and I just walked between them. I mean, he's cussing with his fists raised, and I walked between them and put my hand out, and I said, "You're not going to hurt the lady." She's crying, and I said, "Don't worry, ma'am." I didn't know what I was going to do. I'm praying under my breath. I said, "Oh, God, you've got to help me. I need your power now." And this man stopped. And I said, "You just need to go home," and he went home. You see, I'm saying to you that we have a power as Christians.

About eight or nine years ago, three men stopped on the street at the abortion clinic and threatened to kill me, and I just started praying, and they sped off. What I'm saying to you is that we need to learn to trust God. He's far more powerful than any Grand Eternal Master. He's far more powerful than anyone. And when we come to the Scripture, we find that our warfare is not physical; it is spiritual.

Romans 8:36 and 37 says that we're counted as sheep for the slaughter, and yet we are more than conquerors. You figure that out. It's not done in the flesh. The Bible speaks in Romans 10:16 of the gospel of peace that we believe and preach, and in Romans 12:19 the Lord said, "[Vengeance is mine.](#)" It's not ours. And Romans 13:12 says, "[. . . put on the armour of light.](#)" Do you want to arm yourself? Put on the armor of light.

People are more concerned about the Second Amendment in America than they are the Holy Ghost. They're more concerned about losing the Second Amendment than they are about losing the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is where our power is, and Romans 14:17 says that the Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 3:17 says, "[And the way of peace have they not known,](#)" that is, the lost. In Romans 1:21 and 25 they became vain in their imaginations and they worshipped the creature more than the Creator.

You see, we're not talking about being passive. I've stepped in between many a person since I've been a Christian to take the brunt of whatever was coming and to protect the other individual. I've done this many times. I think that's bravery. I also think it's brave to stand for truth and take whatever is coming. I've done that many times. I've seen others do that

without throwing a blow back to the individual. You see, nonresistance is not being passive. Nonresistance is not a war doctrine; it's a way of life for the Christian. It is to be practiced in times of peace as well as in times of war, and this truth will revolutionize your home, your church, and your society.

The church in the New Testament never, ever took up the sword to kill anybody and to murder anybody. The church in the New Testament took up the cross and followed the Lord Jesus Christ. Their power was in the gospel and in the Word and being filled with the Holy Ghost. The fruit of the Spirit is love and peace and joy and longsuffering and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22 and 23), and I challenge you to read what the works of the flesh are. Some of those are wrath and anger and hatred and things of that nature. So my first point is that martial arts are based on war and violence, which has to do with the training of the body, that is, physical training.

Now, the reason I'm coming to this text in 2 Corinthians is because our warfare is spiritual: Put on the armor of God. Put on the armor of light and be strong in the Lord, spiritually speaking — in other words, in prayer, in praise, in faith, pleading the blood of Christ, doing everything in the name of Christ. That's where our strength is; that's where our power is. Second Corinthians chapter 10, verse 1, says, *"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you."* Notice that Paul speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. That's a real man, by the way. And he said in verses 3 and 4, *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)." Verse 5 says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* So we see clearly that we're in a spiritual warfare. The world is going to fight. The world is going to have violence. The world is going to have hatred, and they're always going to retaliate, but we are in a spiritual warfare. We're working for the Kingdom of God. We're serving in God's church and we have a completely different battle than we see out in the world, and we need to understand that. A true man and a true woman is one who can follow the principles that God has given to us in His Word.

II. THE MARTIAL ARTS CREATE A PRIDEFUL DISPOSITION

The second thing I want you to notice is that the martial arts create a prideful disposition. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, many of the martial arts have their code of conduct or their tenets or their student oaths or their virtues or whatever, and every false religion does this. Every false religion wants to look good on the outside. Every false religion has its code of conduct or its commandments or whatever because it makes them look good

and it makes the students feel good about themselves. It's a replacement for the things of God. Here are just a few variations: self-control, loyalty, discipline, courtesy, integrity, trust, perseverance, justice, being a good citizen, loving your country, being patriotic, and on and on it goes. These are substitutes for true Christianity.

The martial arts say, "We believe in peace," and yet they teach violence. They say, "We believe in mercy," and yet they show little mercy. I can see through the stupidity of all of this. Most people can't see through it. Even the average Christian cannot see through the pride of life that is associated with the martial arts. I'll give you an example. If we were to close our eyes, and I say, "Can you pull up an image of martial arts or a martial artist?" you're going to probably pull up some muck in a bathrobe sitting with his legs crossed looking very humble, and yet he could kill half the world with his fists and feet. It's sort of like the image that the news media or the television tries to portray of the Native Americans. Listen, I'm part Cherokee, so I'm not criticizing the Indians that were in this country, and I do think many of them were done very wrong, but a lot of times you might see a picture of a Native American sitting on a horse. They didn't have horses till the Europeans came, but he's sitting on a horse and he's very peaceful and looking into the sky worshipping the Great Spirit. Well, it wasn't exactly that way, and neither is this image of the martial arts.

We're talking about martial arts creating a prideful disposition; in other words, this deals with the mind and mental training. I'm going to refer to some Scripture, and then we're going to move on to our third point, which is very important. But I'm going to be talking about a prideful disposition. Do you know what the martial arts are about? They're about me. They're about my ability and my discipline and my strength. It's like body building. People in body building stand in front of the mirror. Martial arts are about me and not about anybody else.

Am I against exercise? You know I'm not against exercise. I believe everybody needs a certain amount of exercise. But when we come to the martial arts, it has to do with an inflated view of self. As a matter of fact, when you study their material, you'll find the word "self" showing up a lot: self-confidence, self-improvement, self-esteem, self-defense, self-protection, self-control. That's the opposite of what God says to us. We're not looking for self-esteem in the Christian circles; we're looking to downplay self and put our trust in God. He's the One that lifts us up and encourages us, not through self-inflated views. Martial arts focus on abilities, performances, demonstrations, rankings, competitions, belts and trophies and awards. Again, it's about what I can do, my abilities, what I am capable of doing even though they have their codes of conduct and their virtues and all of that. That is just a front. I'm simply saying that the martial arts create a prideful disposition.

I'm going to read three verses from 1 John chapter 2, and in these verses, I'm going to focus in on one of the aspects of the world, and that's the pride of life. Pride is the first sin, the worst sin. It's self-idolatry. Pride keeps people from getting saved, and it keeps Christians from serving God as they should. You ask, "What is pride?" Well, pride is associated with our accomplishments and talents, pedigree, positions. It's associated with prestige, trying to outshine somebody else; in other words, it's trying to get the applause of men. That's what it's all about. And we have a forbidden love that's mentioned in our text: Love not the world. James 4:4 says if anyone loves the world, they're an enemy of God. When I say "the world," I'm not talking about the planet and the birds and the trees. We're talking about this world system that is headed up by Satan and is in total opposition to God and His Word. That's what we're talking about when we say "the world."

Verse 15 says, "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Notice in verse 16 that there are three aspects to the world, three different areas of temptation: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. What I'm saying to you is that martial arts create a prideful disposition. Those I've been around over the years try to suppress it, but they know they've got an ability that most others don't have.

So the martial arts do not create the fruit of the Spirit that I just mentioned to you in Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23. As a matter of fact, in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 10 and the surrounding context, the apostle Paul says that in his weakness is when he was strong in the Lord. He said, ". . . for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul was a strong warrior for the Lord. He was a soldier for the Lord Jesus Christ. He fought many battles, but they were not physical battles. He was a strong man, but he was a little man and a weak man according to what most say. In Philippians chapter 2, the Bible tells us to have humility and lowliness and that we're to have the mind of Christ. Verses 2 through 5 tell us that Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice, and verses 5 through 8 tell us that He was obedient and that He humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross.

What if Christ had performed the martial arts on the enemy in the Garden of Gethsemane? There would have been no cross; there would have been no salvation. What if He had allowed Peter to go through with cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest and probably cutting his head off? What if Christ had allowed that to go through? There would have been no cross; there would have been no Calvary; there would have been no

salvation for you and me. In Luke chapter 14, verses 26 through 33, Christ talks about discipleship, and, again, He said to take up thy cross — not thy sword — and follow me. He's dealing with self-denial in that passage.

John the Baptist said in John 3:30, "He must increase, but I *must* decrease." First Corinthians 1:29 says, "That no flesh should glory in his presence." In Romans 1, they worship the creature more than the Creator. In Galatians 6, the apostle Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." By the way, Samson is recorded a number of times in the Bible, and I don't know of one Philistine that he ever converted — a very strong man physically speaking. I know of a coach who taught high school football, and he and I used to debate this issue years ago. He said, "Well, it teaches the students discipline." I said, "Let's look at the Scriptures and see if it does." It teaches them how to knock somebody down. It teaches them how to be macho and not to be a true follower of Jesus Christ and be brave in the spiritual things as far as the Scriptures are concerned.


III. MARTIAL ARTS ARE ROOTED IN FALSE RELIGIONS

Let's come to our third point now. The first point is that martial arts are based on war and violence, training the body, physical training. Number two is the prideful disposition. That's the mental training. Number three is that martial arts are rooted in false religions. They have to do with the spirit or a spiritual training. All three of these areas are very dangerous when it comes to New Testament Christianity, but this third area may be the most dangerous. Now, I'm going to be reading in John chapter 14, but I want you to understand this morning that martial arts did not originate in the church of Jesus Christ, so you need to find out where they originated. The martial arts are not rooted in New Testament Christianity, so you need to find out where they came from. The devil has used martial arts to bring Eastern religion and mysticism into the West, into America. The origin of Eastern and Western martial arts has pagan and demonic roots. That is the bottom line.

I've been working on this message for a month, and in the last four weeks, I've read over a hundred quotes of Grand Masters or Eternal Grand Masters as they call themselves. All you've got to do is read what those who teach it say. It's like if you want to know what Disney believes, read their website. If you want to know what the Masonic Lodge believes, read Albert Pike, Mackey. They're the authorities. All you've got to do is look into the Buddhist religion, Zen Buddhist, Hinduism and Taoism — all these kinds of things. All you've got to do is look at the Grand Masters and see what they say about the martial arts. And can I say to you this morning that the martial arts reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ. All other religions reject a supreme God who has a Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary's

cross to redeem mankind from their sins and to escape the judgment that is to come. All other religions deny that.

Peter Lewis says in his book that the origin of the martial arts is out of the Shaolin Temple that is in China. He said all of it originated right there. And I know some will argue that there are different variations and whatever, but the point is, martial arts did not start in the church of Jesus Christ. I realize somebody will come along and say, "Well, our group doesn't do this," but many of them are centered around meditation before and after the practice. Some of them use yoga breathing techniques seeking inner energy and power. Much emphasis is placed upon the body and the mind and, in many cases, even the spirit.

I've got a symbol drawn up here, Yin-Yang . This is a dominant symbol in the martial arts and yoga, as well as the dragon symbol. I found something here that says, "The Eastern view, Hinduism, Buddhists, Taoism, view the serpent dragon as positive, and the biblical view, the Bible, exposes the serpent dragon as Satan, an evil fallen angel who deceived the first man and woman into sin and death," and then it gives a Scripture from Genesis 3 to Revelation chapter 12. The dragon in the Eastern view represents supposedly that natural force that assisted in the world's creation exists within each person.

I've listened and read behind a lot of gurus and a lot of Zen teachers and these kinds of things, and I'm telling you, it's some pretty bizarre stuff. *The Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs* by John Ankerberg and John Weldon considers the martial arts as forms of spiritual education that function as means towards self-realization or self-enlightenment, in other words, the powers within you. It also says, "Because most martial arts incorporate Eastern teaching techniques, it's an easy open door in the Taoism, Buddhists, Confucius and other non-Christian religions." And this is true. I've seen this.

Chuck Norris said that the ancient system of Zen is the core philosophy behind martial arts. He claims to be a Christian but still is involved in martial arts. He's done movies, won world championships. He's a Black Belt in karate, judo, and taekwondo, and he's studied some other arts as well. But he admitted that the ancient system of Zen is the core philosophy behind the martial arts. One writer said, "One of the greatest gifts of martial arts is that they ultimately guide you to new levels of spirituality." Another writer said, "Meditation is the foundation of all true martial arts." Another writer that is for martial arts said, "If you're Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, you should be aware that practicing certain martial arts and their related religious rituals may be considered sacrilege," but he's still for it. Another writer that's for martial arts said, "In martial arts, religion has an equally important role. It was crucial in the historical development of many arts, and it continues to dictate the way in which many students think and act during practice sessions. More than a few Western students have

converted to an Eastern religion simply because their martial arts grew from that spiritual tradition." And he supports martial arts, but he's being honest, and most Christians that are involved in it will not be honest.


So all other religions reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ no matter where they come from. And the martial arts offer enlightenment and spiritual illumination. Taoism is the teaching that there is no personal God as the force behind all of martial arts. So we're talking about something that is very dangerous, not only the physical training of being able to hurt or even kill somebody and then the mental training that's going to puff me up — and I don't care how you bend over your shoulders and try to look humble, it still creates a prideful spirit when you know you can take somebody else out — and then, number three, the spiritual aspect of martial arts. Let me tell you what it will do. If you are a Christian, it will destroy your testimony and rob you of your spiritual walk with God, and if you're not a Christian, it could keep you from ever becoming one. This is how dangerous it is and the things that I've studied in association with it. As a matter of fact, one writer said that "karate was handed down centuries ago from Zen Master to Buddhist Monk by word of mouth always in strict secrecy. Even today everything done in karate can be traced back to the same principles — Zen Buddhism. Karate is clearly a mental and moral exercise, indeed a spiritual experience. In each practice session, there is a concerted effort to unite mind, spirit, and body as salt by Zen priests." And another writer says that "Karate is Zen, which is a school of Buddhism that has been called 'The Religion of Immediate Reality.'" And then here's an article from Bob Jones University back in 1972 with their karate team. See, it's in the Christian colleges. It is in the churches; it's in businesses; it's in the military and everywhere you turn today, and it's growing by leaps and bounds, and it's opening up the door to these things I've been talking to you about.

Taekwondo is rooted in Eastern religion and mysticism, and the philosophy is based on the Yin-Yang theories that I've got drawn out up here. The father of American taekwondo is Jhoon Rhee. He's dead now, but he brought taekwondo here in the sixties. He was a Grand Master, 10th Degree Black Belt. He was a motivational speaker. I've listened to many of his speeches. And this man was a former Moonie. He was a part of the Unification Church, and that church had an association with him in the creating of American taekwondo. Again, he claimed to be a Christian but denied the deity of Christ, and he believed in religious pluralism. I listened to enough of his speeches to know that he was not a Christian and that he denied the Lordship of Jesus Christ. One of his quotes was, "To know God, you must know yourself. Then you can know God." And he said that the instructors have a Constitutional right to teach their respective religious beliefs in their studios. I have some other quotes here by some others that were involved in taekwondo, and when this article was written, there were over 20

million in 140 countries. Karate, taekwondo, judo — all of these have grown by leaps and bounds.

There is a religious aspect to these. I'm going to skip the meditation for now. You know what biblical meditation is. We've preached on it. We've written on it. You're to fill your mind with God and His Word and think about Him. That's not true when it comes to martial arts and yoga and Zen, the Buddhists and the Hindus and all these others. That's not what they classify as meditation. So we'll pick that up when we deal with the subject of yoga.

What are some of the dangers of the martial arts? Well, they create a competitive spirit, and this is contrary to New Testament Christianity. They cause cross-dressing, by the way, among the women. All you've got to do is look at their uniforms. They open the door to the occult. Martial arts grieve the Lord. They unite you with the lost. There's a brotherhood among them; they become very close. The music in their tournaments is normally horrible. The martial arts violate New Testament teaching of turning the other cheek. They cause you to think of yourself more than you think of God, and they will affect your walk with the Lord. That's just the bottom line. They will destroy your testimony. Now, you can put on a show in a church or in a Christian school or in a gymnasium or whatever and you can bust blocks with your head and kick boards and have your Bible in your hand, but — I'm sorry — that's not of God. It's not of God.

Now, before I finish here this morning, let me talk about this symbol: . How many have seen this symbol? It's on the Korean flag, a little bit different design. I think it's even on the Pepsi can. I'm not sure. I haven't drank a Coca-Cola or Pepsi in many years. But, anyway, this is a dominant symbol in the martial arts and also the dragon. The occult circle symbol constantly appears on martial arts web sites and brochures. And I could even show you some right here if you want to see them. I've copied them off. It's a magical symbol of the occult and the New Age. It's been around for hundreds of years. It's a symbol of Taoism — the circle divided, the light and the dark. Notice how it's laid out. It's a circle with an "S" shape inside. That's important too. One side is black with a little white dot in it. The other side is white. What's inside of it? Black, the mixture of black and white. That's important because it's the ancient symbol of contrast.

This philosophy denies the deity of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:16. This philosophy denies absolute truth. This philosophy is going to teach us that you have to have the black and the white, the good and the evil in order to have harmony in the universe. But that's not what my Bible says. In 1 John 1:5 we find clearly that it says, "[God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.](#)" So this is a wicked symbol. It's an occult symbol. The astrologers love this symbol and the sorcerers use this symbol, and the New Age uses this symbol and Eastern mysticism

and religions use this symbol. And it's one of the major symbols — that with the dragon — on karate, taekwondo, judo and many of the other martial arts. It doesn't matter where you go, you're probably going to find this symbol, along with the dragon.

A few quotes: "Yin-Yang dates back many centuries and has been identified with Eastern religions of Confucianism, Buddhists, Taoism, and has been adopted by astrology, witchcraft, and sorcery. This philosophy of the Yin-Yang is meant to explain the mystery of good and evil apart from the Scripture by saying these opposites exist in all life and that the opposites co-exist together and support one another. It is the theory of dualism — the visible world consists of opposites and yet the two are equal and supporting forces in purpose and power. Both are necessary to maintain harmony for life to exist. The two powers are symbolized in light and dark, good and evil, male and female, water and fire, and heaven and earth. This balance is expressed in nature and can be reflected in our lives. If we lose this natural balance, we have lost our way." But Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He says in verse 7, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."

Now, I'm not even getting into the animal styles of the arts, which is very pagan. You ought to take a look at that sometime. In Colossians chapter 2 we're told not to be robbed of our Christianity: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit . . ." It will harm our faith. It will harm our testimony. It will make us useless for the Kingdom of God. One writer said, "The river is wet. If you set foot in it, sooner or later you get soaked." And how true this is.

We're in a spiritual warfare. Do you want to train for battle? Learn how to pray. Learn how to get in touch with God. Learn how to fast. When you talk about fasting to most Christians, you feel like you've just taken a trip from Pluto to Earth because half the people have never fasted and don't even know what it is. Learn the Scriptures. Learn to be obedient. We're told to come out from among them and be separate (2 Cor. 6:17). We know that the devil masks everything that is evil. In 2 Corinthians he's considered to be an angel of light. I just think a lot of people need to get saved.

One more quote real quickly. "The Necessity of Combination Good and Evil" says, "*Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Narnia, The Matrix* promote belief that there is a good side and dark side in everything in the universe. Even *The Wizard of Oz* mingled good and evil; example, The Good Witch of the East and The Evil Witch of the West, but," the writer says, "they were both evil because they were practicing witchcraft and magic, which the Bible forbids. There is no such thing as white magic versus black magic. It's all magic." And here's some of the

stupid philosophy of the martial arts and other things. Before he died many years ago, Bruce Lee said, "The only thing that does not change is that everything changes." Isn't that profound? — and stupid and contrary to the Word of God. You see, no man can serve two masters, Matthew 6:24. Matthew 23:10 says, "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even Christ*." Christ only is Lord and Master. In John 13:13, Jesus says to His disciples, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."

The gospel is designed to restore man to the image of God and not to the image of anything else. We need not learn the way of the heathen. We need to trust God. Elijah said in 1 Kings 18, verse 21, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word." They answered him not a word because they were mixing the holy and profane. They were mixing together the clean and the unclean.

Jesus said in John chapter 8 and verse 36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," and in verse 32 He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And the Jews cried out in verse 33 and said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" But the Jews were in bondage to sin; they were in bondage to apostate Judaism. They were in bondage to the Roman Empire, and they looked Jesus in the face and said, "We were never in bondage," and they rebelled against Him.

There's freedom and truth in Jesus Christ and nowhere else — only in Jesus Christ — and we need to prove all things as in 1 Timothy 5:21. We need to prove anything we get involved in to know whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

Shall we go to the Lord in prayer. If you'll stand with me, please . . .

Father, we thank You this morning for loving us. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the truth that You give us, the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ. And, God, I pray for anyone that will listen to this sermon that they'll take heed to these things that You've given us in Your Word. Lord, we pray that Your will to be done in each of our lives. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.

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