



Musings of a White Belt

By

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I've been a white belt twice: 1961 and 1971. I became a white belt in Judo in 1961. I became a white belt in Christianity in 1971. There are many similarities.

My first lessons as a Judoka involved learning how to show respect to my Sensei, Sempai and other students, put on my uniform, tie my belt, stand at attention, move from attention to the ready position and from the ready position to the guard position quickly and efficiently, stretch my body in many directions, fall and get back up again, and move my body weight across the dojo with an imaginary person. Little did I know then that everything I was learning would be foundational and vital to everything I would ever do in martial arts.

My first lessons as a Christian involved learning how to show respect to my God, church leaders and fellow believers, put on the whole armor of God, pay attention to things I couldn't see, move from paying attention to being ready to being on-guard quickly and efficiently, stretch my mind and spirit in many directions, fall and get back up again, and move my spirit through life in concert with the invisible Spirit of God. Little did I know then that everything I was learning would be foundational and vital to everything I would ever do as a Christian.

Nothing has changed in 50 years in martial arts or 40 years in Christianity. The white belt lessons are the ones I rely on every day of my life. Here are some examples.

- Self defense begins with knowing who to follow and who to resist.
- Faith defense begins with knowing Who to follow and who to resist.

- Self defense begins with knowing how to wear the uniform properly.
- Faith defense begins with knowing how to put on the whole armor of God.
- Self defense begins with paying attention to everything my Sensei tells me and being ready to move quickly with the right physical techniques in the right direction.
- Faith defense begins with paying attention to everything God tells me and being ready to move quickly with the right spiritual techniques in the right direction.
- Self defense begins with stretching my body so it is flexible and fast in dealing with any attack.
- Faith defense begins with stretching my mind and spirit so they are flexible and fast in dealing with any attack.
- Self defense begins with being able to handle a physical fall in a way that keeps me safe and able to

defend myself on the ground until I can get back on my feet.

- Faith defense begins with being able to handle a spiritual fall in a way that keeps me safe and able to defend myself until I can get back on my spiritual feet.
- Self defense begins with knowing how to move my body forward, backward, to the left, to the right, up and down so I'm able to move quickly without losing my balance.
- Faith defense begins with knowing how to move my spirit in tune with the Spirit of God in all directions so I can move quickly without losing my balance.

Remembering the lessons of the white belt also help us help others. I love white belts in the dojo. Every white belt has the potential of becoming a black belt. I love new Christians in the church. Every believer has the potential of becoming a powerful ambassador for Christ. It is a great joy to help them know, grow, and show Christ in their lives.

Just some musings of a white belt.

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