

In college, I got into martial arts really big.

Tae kwon do, Tang soo do, Hap ki do, Judo, Karate, Aikido, and eventually Tai qi quan and Kung fu.

In class we would do repetitive drills of punches, kicks, blocks. Then play fighting, and rehearsed patterns. And at the end of class was 'free fighting.'

I also read a lot of books about martial arts. And watched a lot of movies. Bruce Lee, Chuck Norris, Steven Segal, Jean Claude Van Damme.

All in all, it was a lot of fun.

And there's a bit of an urban legend that goes along with martial arts. The idea that once you reach a certain level, you have to register your hands and feet as "lethal weapons."

I didn't find anything on Snopes.com ... but on stupidquestion.com, there is the question:

Has anyone ever actually had to register their hands as deadly weapons?

And the answer is: NO.

In the first reading, St. Paul tells us:

*do not present the parts of your bodies to sin
as weapons for wickedness,
but present yourselves to God as raised from the dead to life
and the parts of your bodies to God
as weapons for righteousness.*

And later on he tells his readers, and us as well not to be

slaves of ... sin, which leads to death,

But rather to be

[f]reed from sin, [and to] become slaves of righteousness.

So, in letting the parts of our bodies – our hands and feet, our words and thoughts, and any other parts you can think of – lead us away from God and into sin ...

Well, then THOSE things become lethal weapons against us ... for sin ... and against righteousness.

Now, if we knew when we were going to do something that was going to get us into trouble, or if we were going to do something that would separate us from God ... well, we wouldn't do it – RIGHT?

That's what the Gospel is talking about. If we knew how bad it was going to be afterwards ... well, we sure wish we'd never done it.

But sin sneaks up on us and in those cases, we become our own worst enemy – or as St. Paul calls it, “weapons for wickedness.”

What are we supposed to do?

The key is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus ... and with our eyes to keep our minds fixed on Jesus ... and to keep our hearts fixed on Jesus.

And the way to do that is through daily prayer, daily reading of Scripture, and daily examination of conscience.

I'm not asking you to spend hours and hours on this ... unless you want to ☺

But every day, take about a minute for each thing.

For a minute, become aware of the presence of God in your life. He's there, even if you don't notice it.

For another minute, open up a Bible – or Google the Bible, and read it online – if you're not sure where to go, I'd recommend something from the Gospels or Psalms.

And for the last minute, look over your day up to that point. See where you've done good – and thank God for it. And see where you've done ... not so good ... and thank God that you're able to notice your own shortcomings ... and ask for the grace to do better.

One ... two ... three.

In that way, you can move closer to God in Jesus Christ, and become a “weapon for righteousness.”

And it can be said of us, what Jesus says in the Gospel:

*Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so.*