

# What Would Get Someone To Pray And Fast?

Rod Myers  
July 12, 2020

A contrast in fasting: Social Justice or Eternal Justice

## **Social Justice: Gandhi**

Gandhi announced he was beginning a “fast unto death” in order to protest British support of a new Indian constitution, which gave the country’s lowest classes—known as “untouchables”—their own separate political representation for a period of 70 years. Gandhi believed this would permanently and unfairly divide India’s social classes. A member of the more powerful Vaisya, or merchant caste, Gandhi nonetheless advocated **the emancipation of the untouchables**, whom he called Harijans, or “Children of God.”

On January 12, 1948, Gandhi undertook his last successful fast in New Delhi, to persuade **Hindus and Muslims in that city to work toward peace**. On January 30, less than two weeks after breaking that fast, he was assassinated by a Hindu extremist on his way to an evening prayer meeting.

### **7.1 Basic principles of social justice**

- Access (greater equality of access to goods and services)
- Equity (overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power)
- Rights (equal effective legal, industrial and political rights)
- Participation (expanded opportunities for real participation in the decisions which govern their lives).

## **Eternal Justice: Jesus**

Matt.4: 1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ” 7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” 10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written:

‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Neither man fasted as a religious ritual. They fasted for a cause.

Whose attention was Gandhi trying to get? The British, the Hindus and Muslims. He was trying to change their minds about something. He was not fasting to change God’s mind. He wasn’t fasting for an eternal purpose but for a worldly one. He was a prophet of social justice.

What were the circumstances of Jesus’ forty day fast?

Beginning of His ministry to bring salvation to all men by making disciples and preaching the coming of the kingdom of God.

His fast got the attention of the powers of this dark world, Satan himself. Jesus laid down three non-negotiables:

**Total Dependence of the Father (bread alone)**

**Total Submission to the Father (don’t test God)**

**Total Worship and Service to the Father (God alone)**

This is what Jesus came to establish. This was His mission. This was His purpose. This was His cause. It far exceeded mere social justice, the rearranging of society.

### **Gandhi focused on:**

Doing battle against flesh and blood-British, Hindus and Muslims

Trying to create a new social order based on government to improve the lives of people now.

### **Jesus focused on:**

Pleasing the Father

Battling principalities and powers in the heavenly realms

Saving the souls of men from eternal destruction

By doing this Jesus knew that people’s lives would be elevated here and now, but that was secondary to his primary mission.

Paul wrote: Eph.6: 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that

comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

What could get you and me to fast and pray? What would we feel strongly enough about to go without food for even 24 hours? My proposal is that over that over the next six months each of us set aside a regular period of time to fast and pray for Central-but I want to suggest that our focus be Jesus' focus while in the desert: (If you think this will harm your health or interfere with your medications in any way, then please do not attempt this or consult your physician.)

Pleasing the Father

Total Dependence of the Father (bread alone)

Total Submission to the Father (don't test God)

Total Worship and Service to the Father (God alone)

Battling principalities and powers in the heavenly realms

Saving the souls of men from eternal destruction

To help us remember this:

Upward: The Father

Downward: The Enemy Under our feet

Outward: The Souls Jesus came to save

Tomorrow I will send out a text to see who is willing to fast and pray for a regular period of time for six months as we ask God to help us fulfill His will at Central. (Also be looking for a helpful guide to fasting. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners>)

- The Christian Mindset in a Culture of Chaos, Wednesday at 6:30 premiers (Youtube)
- The Mind of Christ, an in depth study of the way Jesus thinks, 11:00 AM Friday, premiers on YouTube)
- A new Discipleship Training class called A Faith Challenge will be forming to begin in September-watch for information on this. (Running our first training now with about 10 people)