

**LIFE IS  
SHORT.  
PLAY  
HARD.**

**Reebok**

**Life is Tough.  
Pray Hard.**

© 1999-2000. All rights reserved.

Life is tough.  
Pray Hard.

Colossians 4:2-4  
Dr. Barry McCarty

## Colossians 4:2-4

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

How do you pray hard—pray with the kind of power and spiritual effectiveness that Paul modeled and taught?

# 1. Be constant.

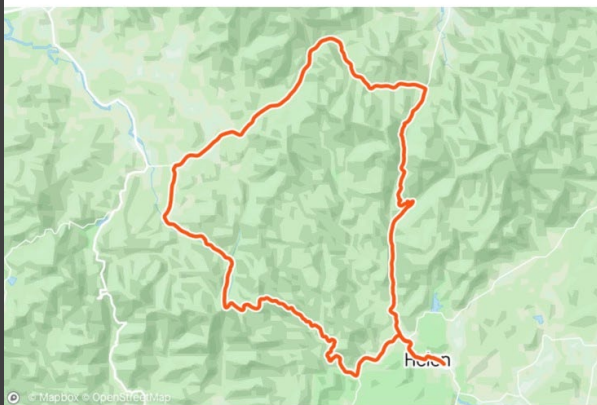
In Verse 2, “continue steadfastly” translates *proskarteréō*, to continue to do something with intense effort. It carries the implication of doing something intense in spite of difficulty.



Barry McCarty

Today at 7:16 AM

## North Gaps from Helen—Hogpen, Jack's, Unicoi



Distance  
42.72 mi

Elevation Gain  
4,495 ft

Moving Time  
3:28:41

Avg Power  
133 W

Avg Speed  
12.3 mi/h

Calories  
1,675 Cal



## *Proskarteréō* is used of:

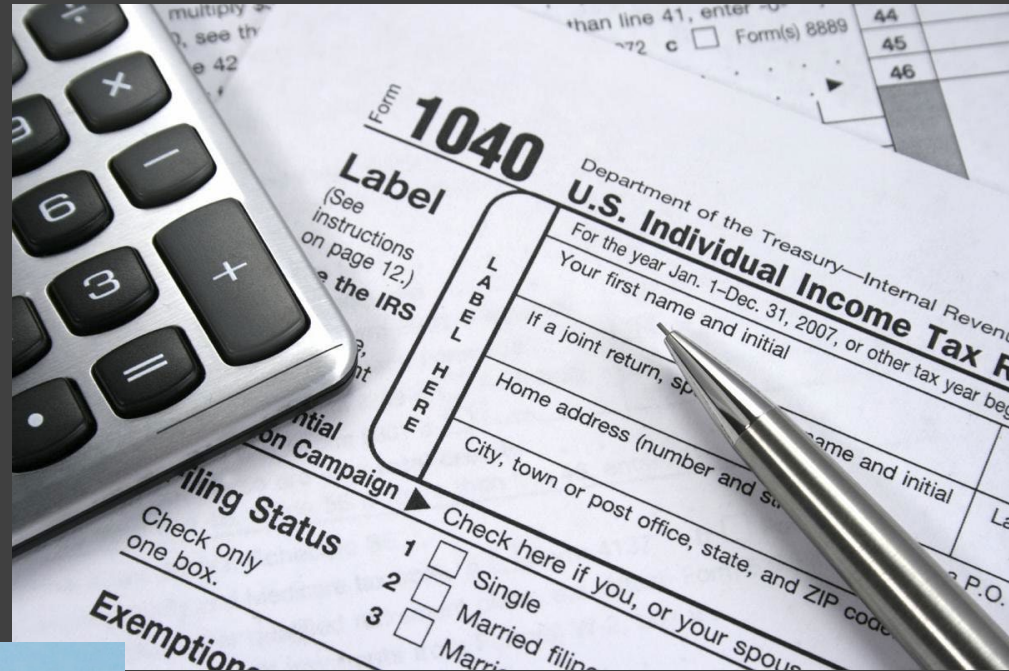
- The **120** who gathered in the upper room before Pentecost and were “devoting” themselves to prayer.
- The **Jerusalem believers** described in Acts 2:42: “And they **devoted** themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”
- The **apostle’s ministry** in Acts 6:4: “But we will **devote** ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

- Prayer is not one of those things that just happens. You must be **intentional** about it.
- In 1:9, Paul said, “we have not ceased to pray for you.”
- In 4: 12, Paul says that Epaphras is “**always struggling** on your behalf in his prayers.”

We are careful about all kinds of things that don't matter a fraction as much as our prayers should.



We are careful  
about everything  
from paying our  
taxes to wearing  
deodorant.





Our prayer life ought to be one of the things we're careful about—one of the essential things of life that we **continue steadfastly**—one of the things we make sure gets done.

Jesus told the story of a hungry friend, a praying friend, and the Mighty Friend to call us to be persistent intercessors for others.

### LUKE 11:5–8

And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; <sup>7</sup> and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his **impudence** he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

## 2. Be watchful.

- Verse 2: “Continue steadfastly in prayer, *being watchful* in it with thanksgiving.”
- Being watchful means to be alert, be awake—to give strict attention to something.
- Paul could have in mind here being watchful against **temptation**.

Mark 14:38

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation

- He could be referring to watching for the **return of Christ**.

Mark 13:33

Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

- There is also a **general watchfulness** that ought to mark our prayers.
- We ought to pray from an alertness that is **spiritually aware** of what is going on around us.

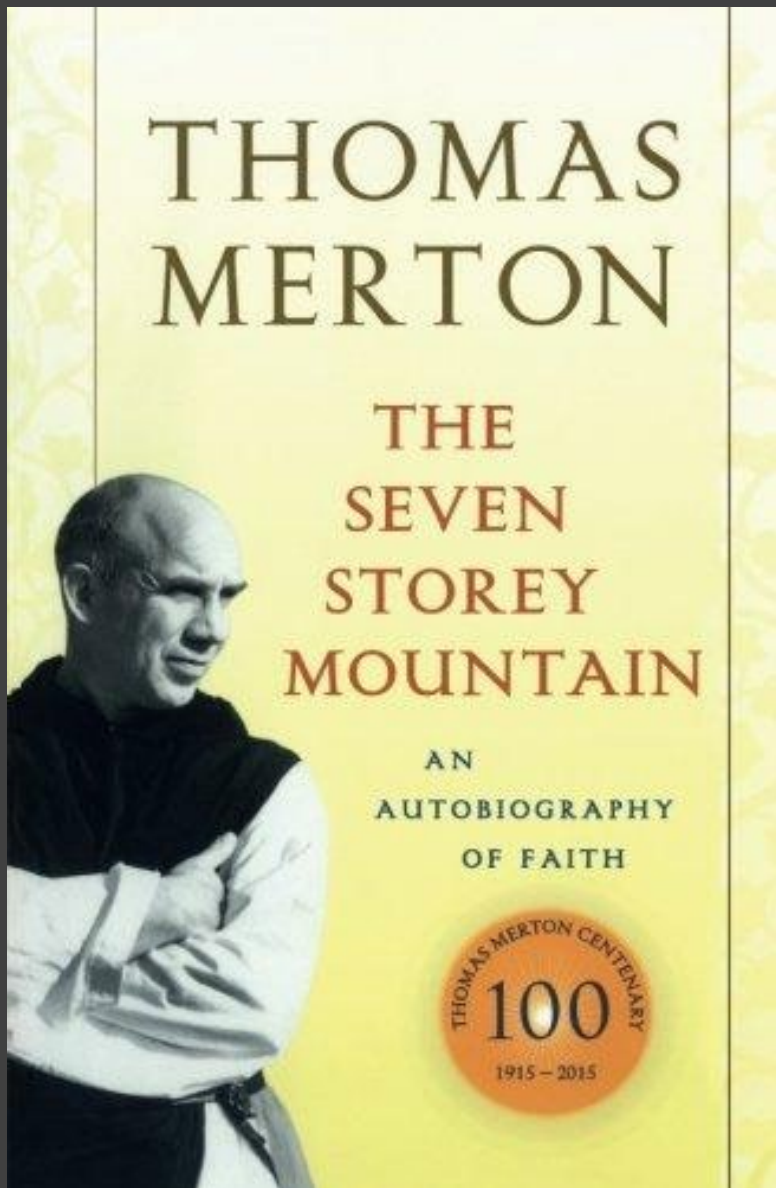
In modern warfare, an *overwatch* is a small force that takes up a position where it can observe and cover an advancing tactical unit, and provide covering fire when enemy forces are spotted.



## ISAIAH 62:6-7

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth."

- Whose **spiritual overwatch** are you?
- **Family. Friends. Neighbors.** People who **have no one else.**



- Thomas Merton tells the story of his awakening and conversion is his best-selling book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*.
- Before he became a Christian, Merton almost died of blood poisoning from an infected wound. At the time he did not believe in God and was so spiritually indifferent, he neither feared nor cared that he would die.

*“The worst thing that had ever happened to me was this consummation of my sins in abominable coldness and indifference, even in the presence of death.*

*“What is more, there was nothing I could do for myself. There was absolutely no means, no natural means within reach, for getting out of that state. Only God could help me. **Who prayed for me?** One day I shall know. But in the economy of God’s love, it is through the prayers of other men that these graces are given. **It was through the prayers of someone who loved God** that I was one day, to be delivered out of that hell where I was already confined without knowing it.*

—Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*

### 3. Be thankful.

- Verse 2: “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it *with thanksgiving*.”
- Paul began this letter with a prayer that the Colossians would live the kind of lives that were “fully pleasing” to the Lord. Part of that kind of life is “*giving thanks to the Father*” (1:12).
- In chapter 3, Paul reminds the Colossians:

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to God the Father through him.

- So, here, he closes the letter with a reminder to make thanksgiving an essential part of their prayers.

- Paul's word for thanksgiving here, *eucharistia*, is also one of the names for the Lord's Supper, "the Eucharist."

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-24

"The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

- Knowing that he was just a few hours from going to the cross, our lord still gave a *prayer of thanks*.





There is always something to be grateful for—always.



Blessed be the name of the Lord  
2 Who forgiveth all thy iniquities  
3 Who healeth all thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with mercies;  
4 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
5 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.  
6 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.  
7 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.  
8 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.  
9 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
10 Who covereth as with a garment all thy iniquities, and pardoneth all thy unrighteousness.  
11 Who telleth thee thy secret, and shall not be ashamed of thee.  
12 Who covereth all thy iniquities, and shall not be ashamed of thee.  
13 Who telleth thee thy secret, and shall not be ashamed of thee.  
14 Who covereth all thy iniquities, and shall not be ashamed of thee.  
15 Who telleth thee thy secret, and shall not be ashamed of thee.





## 4. Be helpful.

- Verses 3-4: “At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—<sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.”
- Look how often the Apostle Paul asked other people to pray for him and his ministry.

To the **Romans** he says, “Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”

After reminding the **Ephesians** of the key role that prayer plays in spiritual warfare, he says, “Pray also for me.”

He directs similar requests to the **Corinthians**, the **Philippians**, the **Thessalonians**, and his friend **Philemon**.

- In **nine** of his thirteen epistles, Paul specifically appeals to his friends and brethren to remember him in prayer.
- Though most of them remain nameless to us, the New Testament record suggests there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of first century believers who shared in the successes of this preeminent missionary apostle through their prayers.



# imb

## *Every church. Every nation.*

Helping churches take the gospel to unreached people.

### PRAY

Join the critical work of praying for unreached peoples. [Learn more.](#)

### GIVE

Empower IMB missionaries to make disciples. [Learn more.](#)

### GO

Explore opportunities to take the gospel to the nations. [Learn more.](#)

We believe *every church* has a role to play in reaching *every nation* with the gospel.

# Pray

*Pray for missions.*

[VIEW ALL](#) | [PRINT](#)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11 2019

SUB-SAHARAN  
AFRICAN PEOPLES

## KAMPALA, UGANDA

(kahm-PAH-lah) - "This month will bring many exciting possible beginnings," writes the Kampala Urban Team. "On October 14-18, a group of university students will be visiting. We hope that their being here will pave the way for our connection to a university ministry in Kampala and also 'cast a vision' for other students to..."

[CONTINUE](#)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11 2019

NORTHERN AFRICAN  
AND MIDDLE  
EASTERN PEOPLES

## NORTHERN IRAQI ARABS OF IRAQ

Families living in refugee camps are not completely free from violence and the fear of evil finding them. Many feel that they found refuge from the terror they escaped, yet problems continue to persist. Some have been harmed and even murdered by extremists hiding in refugee camps. Pray for the families living in fear,...

[CONTINUE](#)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11 2019

EUROPEAN PEOPLES

## KHARKOV, UKRAINE

(HAR-kov) - Intercede for a volunteer team from Arkansas who will be working with a new church start in the community outreach center in a densely populated region of Kharkov, Ukraine. The team will be leading a projected 30 university students and teens each evening in an English club. Ask the Lord to develop...

[CONTINUE](#)

**E.M. Bounds** (1835-1913), who daily scheduled the hours from four to seven in the morning for prayer. His book ***Power Through Prayer*** has become a devotional classic.

“Air is not more necessary to the lungs than prayer is to the preacher. It is an absolute necessity for the preacher to pray. It is an absolute necessity that the preacher be prayed for. These two propositions are wedded into a union which ought never to know divorce: the preacher must pray; the preacher must be prayed for. It will take all the praying he can do, and all the praying he can get done, to meet the fearful responsibilities and gain the largest, truest success in his great work.”

# How do I pray with power?

1. Be constant.
2. Be watchful.
3. Be thankful.
4. Be helpful.

**Life is Tough.  
Pray Hard.**

© 1999-2000. All rights reserved.