

Has God Made You a Passionate Pioneer?

I love the factual accounts of courageous American pioneers as they settled and developed western territories. I learn from the brave instruments of social justice throughout history as well as the behind the scenes stories of present-day leaders who care for society's good. No matter what time in history, pioneers face fear's tyranny; they also embody a determined belief that they can accomplish more while serving humanity in a greater or more significant way.

Even when I was young, my heart longed to be different, but only in order to make a difference. I never wanted to be average, but only to give my life for a higher cause. I didn't realize that a pioneering spirit dwelled inside of me and that mindset continues to propel me forward. Maybe that is you too. Are you a pioneer willing to blaze a trail for the good of others?

5 Attributes of These Brave Forerunners

1. Courage to step out of self-comfort. You are willing to pay a higher price, suffer personal loss and work when others are playing. You're not angry because of your sacrifice because you know that one day, others will benefit.

2. Courage to stand to your feet when circumstances knock you down. We always see ourselves achieving the goal in the future. However, when our journey is riddled with disappointments, failures and unforeseen setbacks, fear can penetrate our hearts with great forcefulness. This is common to life, but the uncommon pioneer will get back up on their feet. Think about it—you can't stay down when *who you are* and *what you carry* is at risk.

3. Courage to be different. A pioneer is not in competition to

be the best but to be individually distinctive. Pioneers do not live in comparison but release the gift within themselves to impact the lives of others. They do not need to put others down in order to lift themselves up nor be critical of others to feel better about themselves. They are being true to who they are and to their cause.

4. Courage to be criticized. Theodore Roosevelt said it best, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

5. Courage to be misunderstood and alone. It takes great courage to remain steadfast when no one can see what you see or value what you are doing. Sometimes a pioneer does not have a language to articulate what they know on the inside. Others may never understand the depth of love they carry or the hate of injustice they feel that propels them to action.

As a pioneer, you hold a passion to chart new territory, to take the road less traveled and to impact your world for good. Don't give up! Be courageous! {eo}

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