

The Pioneering Spirit

By Julia Bettencourt

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

I've always admired the pioneering women of America. They had so much to endure and yet lived with high hopes. They wanted something better for themselves and for their families. When I look back on them I think of all the conveniences we have now and it's just staggering to think of living the way those women did. They were brave and lead such extraordinary lives.

I've been reading a lot about the history of those pioneering women and decided that across the board there were several characteristics that struck me that most of those women had in common. Things that I think are worth noting about their spirit.

1. **Pioneer Women Weren't Satisfied Where They Were.** – The pioneers wanted something better for themselves and their families, which is why they made the long journeys with their husbands and families and survived the hardships that they did.

We never should be satisfied with where we are in our Christian lives. Not that we shouldn't be satisfied with certain things and life in general. I'm not saying unsatisfied to the point that we complain all the time, but we should always be unsatisfied where we are spiritually and should be striving always to improve our relationship with the Lord. We should be improving our prayer life, our bible study, and those things that help us grow in Christ.

2. **Pioneer Women Had a Vision.** – The pioneers could see past all of the hardships and troubles that they knew they were going to face. They could see what lay up ahead. A whole new world and a place to settle with their families. In their minds, they saw their homes and farms already built. They just had to get there and carry out those dreams.

Do we have a vision of what the Lord would have for us personally? What's God been working in your heart about? Maybe your vision is to be a prayer warrior. Maybe it's teaching a Sunday school class, mentoring another lady, or even the vision of seeing your church family grow. The pioneering spirit was visionary and we need that too.

3. **Pioneer Women Were Willing to Travel.** – These women were willing to travel miles and miles over rough road in covered wagons in order to reach their dreams. They knew it was going to be a long trip.

How about us? How far would we travel for the Lord? Not that He calls us all to be missionaries in a foreign land, but He does call some that way.

Others of us He calls to go across the street and share our story with a neighbor, or to teach a Sunday School class. Some of us the Lord may call on just to bake some food and drive up the road to deliver it to a needy family. We most likely will deliver that food while driving in a comfortable car with heat and air, not in a covered wagon. But how willing are we to go and do what the Lord lays on our hearts?

4. **Pioneer Women Were Aware of Difficulties** – The pioneer women knew that the road wasn't going to be easy. They'd heard of the Indian attacks, the outlaws that lay in wait, the sickness that could be encountered, and they knew the journey itself over rough terrain was going to be full of hardships and difficulties.

Any time you do something for Christ, there's going to be difficulties too. Those darts of the devil will come hurling your way when you step out to work for the Lord so build up your defenses and put your armor on because the road won't be easy.

5. **Pioneer Women Faced The Hardships That Came.** – Not only were the pioneers aware that difficulties were going to come, but they faced them with courage when they did come. They had to be tough sometimes. Attacks along the trail were common. Sickness was common on the wagon trail. The women had to be brave.

Those pioneer women had so much to deal with. How do we face our hardships that come? Are we ready for them? Do we lean on Christ to help us through them? Do we find our courage in the Lord?

6. **Pioneer Women Worked Diligently.** – Pioneer women had a lot of chores to accomplish both when they were on the trail and after they settled into a home on the prairie. Most of the pioneer women helped their husbands tend to the fields, care for the animals, plus cook and do all of the housework, care for their children, and put away food for winter. They mostly made their own clothing and quilts, made their own soap, churned their own butter, and other things. It was a full day's work and those women had to be diligent in order to get it all done.

How diligent do we work? Even with today's modern conveniences sometimes we have trouble in this area. How hard and diligent to we work for the Lord? Are we really doing all we could be doing and putting our all into what the Lord has for us? Diligence was a key part in the pioneering spirit.

7. **Pioneer Women Accomplished Much.** - Every day they accomplished much. Pioneer women couldn't be sporadic or they would die. Theirs was a life that required constant attention. They couldn't let things slide.

What's sliding in your life and walk with Christ? Is it your bible reading or your prayer life? What's sliding at home? What's sliding in your relationships with your spouse and children? How much are you accomplishing?

8. **Pioneer Women Lead the Way.** - The pioneer women were the very first to settle here in America. They lead the way for others to make the journey and follow their own dreams. Just like a good leader, they set their goals and looked toward their vision. They were courageous and strong and they inspired other people.

Do we lead the way for others? Are we mentoring women? Do we set examples for our children to follow? Do we inspire others?

9. **Pioneer Women Prepared the Way.** – Not only did the pioneer women lead the way, they also prepared the way. Even now we can look back on the lives of the pioneers and see over time how progress was made because of them.

Are we making a way for others? What have we done that will enable others to serve the Lord better? I think of some of the pioneering missionaries and how they opened up the way for other missionaries in various countries. As mothers, we can prepare the way in the hearts of our children by teaching them God's word and biblical principles. When we work with children in the role of a teacher or a VBS helper we can help prepare the hearts of children as well. When we get involved in women's ministry we prepare the way for other women to serve Christ by our example and the things that we mentor. Mentoring is part of being a trailblazer for Christ.

Conclusion:

Above everything, the pioneering spirit enabled progress. I wonder how much progress I make not only in my daily life as a wife and mother, but in my spiritual life as well. Being a trailblazer for the Lord would be a wonderful way to go down in history.

I admire all that the pioneering women of America did and I hope I can live my life with that same enthusiasm and diligence. Those women ventured out into the unknown. They didn't know what lay up ahead. Sometimes we don't know what lies up ahead when we step out by faith and do something for Christ, but we have to be willing to take that adventure.

Look at the faith heroes in Hebrews chapter 11. In a way they were pioneers for the Lord. Look at how they each stepped out by faith and ventured into the

unknown. They took the journey and look at the wonderful things that they accomplished. Look at the progress that they made “*by faith*”.

Take the time to read through the entire chapter of Hebrews 11 and just soak in all of things for which these heroes of faith are remembered. Catch that pioneering spirit that they had for the Lord.

What I think is wonderful about Hebrews 11 is that all kinds of people are mentioned and remembered as serving the Lord. They came from all different walks of life. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, you can venture into the unknown by way of faith and step out on an adventure for the Lord.

So, have you caught the pioneering spirit?