



## Study Guide

# Pioneer Spirit Study Guide

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## Series Overview

This world needs the Pioneer Spirit. We live in an upside-down world. The Pioneer Spirit is important in helping people become Christ-followers.

## Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in exploring the importance of the Pioneer Spirit

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# 1 –Turning the World Right-Side Up

## Icebreaker: Describe the Culture

Make a list to describe the culture in your neighborhood.

*Culture = behavior  
patterns, beliefs,  
tastes, education,  
hobbies*

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- Paul's plan was to evangelize the main city of the area. The newly established church would reach out to the surrounding areas (**Acts 17:1-4**). Discuss how this model for church planting can be effective.
- How was Paul's message different when he spoke to the Gentiles (**Acts 17:21-24**)?
- How do people who are not believers view the universe? Considering their views, what are some ways to make it easier for them to hear the Gospel?
- What was the non-believers' accusation against Paul (**Acts 17:5-6**)? Discuss how non-believers may view you.

## Dig a Little Deeper

Consider the following methods of witnessing. Which ones have you used?

<i>Method</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Used It?</i>
Shared my faith story	<b>John 4:29,</b> <b>Acts 22:3-8</b>	
Answered questions about my faith	<b>Col 4:6, John 9:8-11,</b> <b>1Pet 3:15</b>	
Explained the Scriptures	<b>Acts 8:30-35,</b> <b>Acts 17:1-3</b>	
Wrote about the gospel	<b>John 20:31,</b> <b>Luke 1:4</b>	
Lived in ways that glorified God	<b>Mat 5:16</b>	

## Application Exercise

Pray, asking for God's help to effectively communicate the timeless message of the resurrection. Ask Him to show you how to adapt what you say to relate to the culture of your audience.

## 2–Becoming Followers of the Lord

### Icebreaker: American Idols

Make a list of idols in your country today.

*Idol = anything you allow to replace God or obscure your vision of God*

### Questions for Study or Discussion

- Describe Paul's satisfaction with each of the following groups of new converts.
  - The Thessalonians (**1The 1:2-3**)
  - The Corinthians (**1Cor 1:4-7**)
  - The Ephesians (**Eph 1:15-16**)
  - The Philippians (**Php 1:3-6**)
- What is the difference between hearing the Gospel and opening your heart to God (**1The 1:6-7** and **Rev 3:20**)?
- Many of the Thessalonians lost their homes and spent time in jail because of their faith in Christ (**1The 2:14**). How could they have received the Gospel in **joy** (**1The 1:6**)?
- What does it mean to turn **to** God **from** idols (**1The 1:9**)? From what idols did you turn when you accepted Christ as Savior?
- For what were the Thessalonians waiting (**1The 1:10**)? Discuss the paradox that while the kingdom of Christ is yet to come, He is also already here with us (**John 14:3** and **John 14:23**).



## Dig a Little Deeper

Inward changes produce outward evidence.

<i>1The 1:3</i>	<i>Inward</i>	<i>Outward</i>
Your work of faith	Faith: <b>Rom 10:17, Heb 11:1</b>	Work: <b>Jas 2:17-18</b>
Labor of love	Love: <b>Rom 5:8</b>	Labor: <b>Heb 6:10</b>
Patience of hope	Hope: <b>Rom 8:24-25</b>	Patience: <b>Rom 8:23</b>

## Application Exercise

Think about where you spent your time in the past month.  
Did the way you spent your time draw you closer to God or interfere with your relationship with God?

		
I spent my time on things that deepened my relationship with God.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1	I spent my time on things that harmed my relationship with God.

Identify any idols that are harming your relationship with God.  
Make a plan to eliminate those idols.

# 3–Developing Others Spiritually

## Icebreaker: Beyond Words

Try using different facial expressions, hand gestures, and postures to convey the following.

- gentleness
- interest
- compassion
- frustration
- boredom
- anger

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- Compare and contrast being a physical parent with being a spiritual parent.
- What are the advantages of being gentle with people as you tell them about Christ (**1The 2:7**)?
- To bring the Message with love requires more than words. What are some ways to lovingly share the Gospel (**1The 2:8** and **1John 3:16**)?
- Why is diligence an important factor in developing others spiritually (**1The 2:9**)?

## Dig a Little Deeper

When you aim to help people grow closer to Christ, what is your manner in doing it?

<i>Manner</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
Lovingly	<b>Mark 10:21, Php 1:15-17</b>	
Urgently	<b>2Cor 5:20, Eze 33:7-9</b>	
Fearlessly	<b>Eph 6:19-20, Acts 4:29</b>	
Clearly and courteously	<b>1Pet 3:15, Col 4:4-6</b>	

## Application Exercise

How do you know if you are ready to develop another person spiritually?

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Like Me &lt; - - - - -&gt; Not Like Me</i>
My relationship with Christ is my first priority.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I use God's Word to guide my life.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I love others and long for them to be close to Christ.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

- If these criteria sound like you, ask God to bring you people who you can nurture in their walk with God.
- If these criteria do not sound like you, ask God to send someone to hold you accountable in your walk with Him.



# 4-Handling Spiritual Opposition

## Icebreaker: Debate: Subtle or Direct

Make a case to support each of the following statements.

- Statement-1: Direct opposition is more difficult to handle than subtle opposition.
- Statement-2: Subtle opposition is more difficult to handle than direct opposition.

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- When you have experienced any form of persecution, how did it affect you (**1The 2:14-18**)?
  - drained my energy
  - ate up my time
  - tempted me to do things under my own power
  - other
- What can members of your group do to help one another during times of spiritual opposition?
- Which of the following has helped you when you feel under attack?
  - Praise and thank God (**1The 5:18**).
  - Let the Holy Spirit control your actions (**Pro 21:23** and **Jas 1:25**).
  - Pray intensely (**Heb 4:15-16**).
  - Trust God (**John 6:68-69**).
  - Continue in patience (**Jas 5:10-11**).
- Pray for the spiritual welfare of each member in your group.

## Dig a Little Deeper

Consider the following traps and how to avoid them.

<i>Trap</i>	<i>How to Avoid It</i>
Isolate yourself from others.	Stay close to God and other believers ( <a href="#">John 17:20-22</a> ).
Engage in leading conversations.	Be careful of the types of conversations in which you take part ( <a href="#">2Cor 11:3</a> , <a href="#">2Tim 2:23-26</a> , <a href="#">Jas 1:13-15</a> ).
Allow others to appeal to your self-interests.	Guard against your pride and guard your heart ( <a href="#">Eph 2:1-3</a> , <a href="#">1John 2:15-16</a> ).

### Application Exercise

Think about what's been happening in your life over the last several months. How well have you avoided the traps in the table?

- If you've been struggling in one or more areas, pray asking God to help you avoid those traps going forward. Pick a verse to memorize and repeat it to yourself when you sense there is a trap nearby.
- If you have not been struggling recently, pray a prayer of thanks. Ask for continued protection.

# 5–Supporting Others in Affliction

## Icebreaker: Would You Rather

When you are experiencing rough times would you rather have someone:

- spend time with you and simply listen?
- offer you advice?
- read comforting Bible verses to you?
- other?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- What was the significance of Paul sending Timothy to the Thessalonians (**1The 3:1-2**)?
  
- In what way did the Thessalonians bring comfort to Paul (**1The 3:7**)?
  
- What did Paul want for the Thessalonians (**1The 3:3-10**)?  
Make a list of ways to strengthen and comfort those who are suffering.
  
- Through what means does God encourage and comfort believers?
  - ▶ **Romans 15:4**
  - ▶ **Acts 9:31**

## Dig a Little Deeper

Study these passages. Which ones could you use as a model for your prayers when you need encouragement or want to encourage others?

- [Nehemiah 6:9](#)
- [Psalm 119:28](#)
- [Colossians 1:9-11](#)
- [2Thessalonians 2:16-17](#)

## Application Exercise

In the coming week, do something to encourage and comfort a person who is struggling.

Here are a few ideas:

- Invite the person out for coffee and simply listen to them.
- Telephone the person and pray for them.
- Write a prayer for the person. Send it by email or in a greeting card.
- Offer to do some chores for the person to lighten their load.

# 6 – Growing Deeper with God

## Icebreaker: What is Wrong with This Picture?

Imagine that, several years ago, your friend inherited \$10 million. This friend still lives in a rat-infested shack and mooches money from you. What is wrong with this picture?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- Sanctification is the process of becoming set apart for God's holy use. The process begins when you dedicate yourself to serving God by loving Him and others [**1The 4:3**]. When you do that, you begin to turn your back on impure thoughts and behaviors. You move out of that rat-infested shack.
  - ▶ What could we do to become ready to dedicate ourselves to serving God?
  - ▶ If you've dedicated yourself to serving God, tell your group about the experience. How have your thoughts and behaviors changed since then?
  
- Why is it important for us to become sanctified [**1The 4:7-8**]?
  
- What did God give us to make it possible to do what He commands [**1The 4:8**]?
  
- To live a quiet life, we must discard idols [**1The 4:11-12** and **1The 1:9**]. Make a list of idols within each of the following categories:
  - ▶ Social / Family
  - ▶ Religious
  - ▶ Civic
  - ▶ Creation

## Dig a Little Deeper

Paul based his instructions for behavior standards on God's holy character ([Lev 20:7](#) and [1Pet 1:14-16](#)).

Faithful	<a href="#">2The 3:3</a>
Loving	<a href="#">John 15:9</a>
Good	<a href="#">Psa 34:8</a>
Just	<a href="#">Isa 30:18</a>
Merciful	<a href="#">Lam 3:22</a>

## Application Exercise

List a few of your behaviors that honor God's character and a few of your behaviors that do not honor God's character.

<i>Behaviors That Honor God's Character</i>	<i>Behaviors That Do Not Honor God's Character</i>

## 7 – Finding Comfort in Death

### Icebreaker:

### We Shall Behold Him

Discuss how this verse portray the death of a Christ-follower.

[godtube.com/watch/?v=1BOE1JNU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BOE1JNU)

*The angel shall sound the shout of His coming; The sleeping shall rise from their slumbering place. And those who remain shall be changed in a moment; And we shall behold Him then face to face.  
-Dottie Rambo, We Shall Behold Him*

### Questions for Study or Discussion

- Hope in this context is “elpis” which means expectation (**1The 4:13**). It is not wishful thinking. Believers who die will be with Jesus (**1The 4:14**). How does this comfort you about your death and the death of your loved ones (**Psa 17:15**)?
- What was the source of Paul’s assurance to the Thessalonians (**1The 4:15**)?
- Of the things that will happen when Christ returns, which do you look forward to the most (**1The 4:17** and **Php 3:20-21**)?
  - Being with Christ forever
  - Being with other Christ-followers
  - Getting a glorified body
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- If you find comfort in knowing what will happen at Christ’s return, what can you do to comfort others (**1The 4:16-18**)?

## Dig a Little Deeper

Christ spoke of His coming again in **John 14:3**.

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (NKJV)*

<b>John 14:3</b>	<b>1The 4:16-17</b>
<i>I will come again</i>	<i>For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven...</i>
<i>and receive you to Myself</i>	<i>...caught up together... to meet the Lord in the air...</i> In Latin, the word for caught up is rapturo which is why many people call this the rapture.
<i>that where I am, there you may be also</i>	<i>...thus we shall always be with the Lord.</i>

## Application Exercise

Pray, thanking God for the comfort of His Words in **1Thessalonians 4**. Ask Him to bring someone to you that you may comfort with those words.



# 8–Looking Forward to Christ’s Return

## Icebreaker: Preparation

Some things need more preparation than others. What in your life has required the most preparation?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- When will Christ return (**1The 5:2** and **Mat 24:36**)?
  
- When Christ returns, why will this surprise some people (**1Pet 3:20** and **2Pet 3:3-4**)?
  
- The requirements for getting to heaven and facing the judgment seat of Christ are not the same (**1John 2:28** and **2Cor 5:9-11**). Summarize the differences.
  
- As you look forward to His return, which of the following are you most likely to do? Why?
  - Faithfully do the work He assigns me to do (**Luke 12:41-48**)
  - Love other believers (**Heb 10:25**)
  - Be a good example in the way I lead my life (**1John 3:1-3**)
  - Share my faith as often as possible (**2Cor 5:20-21**)

## Dig a Little Deeper

<i>Will Taste God's Wrath</i>	<i>Will Not Taste God's Wrath</i>
Earth dwellers	Citizens of heaven
Those who have not accepted Christ	Those who are Christ-followers
<a href="#">Isa 13:6-9</a>	<a href="#">Php 3:20</a> <a href="#">John 5:24</a>

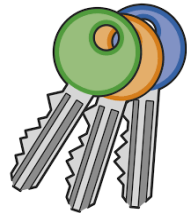
## Application Exercise

Pray, asking God to show you where He wants you to make changes in your behaviors and priorities. Ask Him to help you get ready to meet Him at the Judgment Seat.

# 9–Building Healthy Relationships

## Icebreaker: Relationship Keys

Brainstorm a list of keys to having healthy relationships.



## Questions for Study or Discussion

- What should you know about the ones who labor among you [**1The 5:12**, **John 10:2-4**, **Col 1:27-28**]?  
How can that help you build relationships with them?
- Whose responsibility is it to warn the unruly among the church [**1The 5:14** and **2The 3:11**]? How can you do this in a way that builds relationships?
- What can we do to comfort the fainthearted [**1The 5:14**, and **Heb 12:2-3**]?
- In what way are the following challenging for you?
  - ▶ Always rejoicing [**1The 5:16**]
  - ▶ Praying without ceasing [**1The 5:17**]
  - ▶ Giving thanks in everything [**1The 5:18**]
  - ▶ Allowing the Holy Spirit to be in charge [**1The 5:19**]
  - ▶ Honoring what the Bible says [**1The 5:20-21**]
  - ▶ Abstaining from all appearance of evil [**1The 5:22**]How do these things build your relationship with God?
- Discuss what we can do to test all things [**1The 5:21**]?

## Dig a Little Deeper

Some people believe in appearances. That's why what we do or say in front of other people is important (**1The 5:22, Rom 12:1-3, Rom 14:16-18, 2Cor 6:3**).

## Application Exercise

How are you doing in building and maintaining healthy relationships?  
(Skip any that don't apply.)

<i>Relationship with:</i>	<i>Doing Well &lt; - - -&gt; Needs Work</i>
God	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Spouse	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Children	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Other Family Members	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Those in Your Church	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Work/School Associates	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Friends	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Neighbors	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Other _____	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Pray, asking God to help you build and maintain healthy relationships.

# 10-Allowing Christ to Finish His Work

## Icebreaker: Describe Worship

Using the quote as inspiration, describe what it means to worship God.

*For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.  
-William Temple*

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- Discuss how Jesus, as the way of peace, separates you from the things of the world (**1The 5:23** and **Luke 1:79**).
- What role does worship play in allowing Christ to finish His work (**1The 5:24**)?
- In what way does prayer allow Christ to finish His work (**1The 5:25** and **Rom 15:30**)?
- How does maintaining good relationships allow Christ to finish His work (**1The 5:26**)?
- What role does God's Word play in allowing Christ to finish His work (**1The 5:27** and **Mat 21:42**)?

## Dig a Little Deeper

In Paul's day, not everyone could read. Even for those who could, there were not copies of God's Word readily available. That's why it was customary to read it aloud [[Acts 13:14-15](#)]. God has blessed us with easy access to His Word. Following are some reasons to read God's Word.

God's Word:

- Shows us how to live well according to His standard [[Psa 19:7-11](#)].
- Tells us who He is and who we are [[John 1:1](#) and [Eph 2:4-10](#)].
- Guides us into a relationship with Him [[1Pet 1:23](#) and [Jas 1:21](#)].
- Teaches and corrects us [[2Tim 3:16-17](#)].
- Equips us for service [[Eph 6:10-18](#)].

## Application Exercise

<i>My Responsibility</i>	<i>Doing Well &lt; - - -&gt; Needs Work</i>
Worshipping Him with my body, soul, and spirit	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Praying for those who help others become outward-focused followers of Jesus	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Maintaining loving relationships with fellow believers	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Reading God's Word and applying it to my life	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Pray, asking God to help you fulfill your responsibilities in allowing Him to finish His work.