

FAITH beyond BELIEF

<i>Session</i>	Transformation Paradigm	Prayer Evangelism Principle	Personal Life Application Challenge	Group Life Application Challenge	Faith Beyond Belief Challenge
1. <i>(p. 3)</i>	Transformation Overview	Series Overview	Daily Devotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete Roster – Get to know names 	Read “Transformation” by Ed Silvano
2. <i>(p. 17)</i>	Paradigm #1 Discipling Nations	Prayer and Evangelism	Prayer for Top 3 Circles of Influence	Prayer for Life Group members	Prayer for Pastors and community leaders
3. <i>(p. 33)</i>	Paradigm #2 Reclamation Project	Principle #1 Bless and Speak Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bless and speak peace – Pray with someone – Ask forgiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Special card/note to community leader – Identify an outreach family 	Prayer walk your neighborhood, workplace or school
4. <i>(p. 51)</i>	Paradigm #3 Marketplace Ministry	Principle #2 Fellowship and Build Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Initiate three conversations – Develop deeper relationships 	Plan a fellowship event with outreach family	Build relationships in workplace and community
5. <i>(p. 67)</i>	Paradigm #4 Kingdom Builders	Principle #3 Minister and Respond to Felt Needs	Respond to “felt needs” of same three people	Respond to “felt needs” of outreach family	Respond to a “felt need” in city or region
6. <i>(p. 83)</i>	Paradigm #5 Systemic Poverty	Principle #4 Proclaim the Good News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthen key relationships – Write a two-minute testimony – Practice your testimony and be prepared to share 	Proclaim the Good News to outreach family as the Holy Spirit gives you the opportunity	Respond to issues of “systemic poverty” in your city or region
7. <i>(p. 101)</i>	Transformed Thinking	Transformed Living	Continue to implement “paradigms and principles”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review impact on outreach family – Next steps as Life Group 	Continue to partner for transformation in your city or region



Life Group Roster

name	phone	e-mail
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FAITH beyond BELIEF

SESSION 1

Sharing Life (20 minutes)

Gather: Welcome to Faith Beyond Belief! Thank you for participating with others in this special time of spiritual growth and life application. Begin this first session by getting better acquainted with your Life Group members! Please take turns sharing briefly:

- your name
- family information
- where you live
- what you do for work or how you spend your time
- one reason why you are excited to be a part of this Life Group

Discuss: What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the word Transformation? Write down some of the group responses.

What do you think might be unique about a biblical understanding of transformation?

Read: As you begin this seven-week transformation series, remember that you are not alone. You will have the support of others who may include your pastor, church family and fellow Life Group participants. Most importantly, you will have the support of a God who loves you and wants the very best for your life. Only Jesus Christ can bring about genuine transformation, so please join your hearts together wherever this opportunity finds you today and share as a group in this prayer of dedication.

Pray Together: Dear God, thanks for this beautiful world you've given us and everything in it. We know that you love it all and that Jesus died for it all. Would you please show us how to love it too? During these next weeks we want to hear your voice and learn from your Word. We want to grow together and accomplish your purposes. Stretch us, Lord. Continue to transform us by your grace. Help us to move beyond "church as usual" in order to experience Faith Beyond Belief. Transform our thinking. Transform our living. And please, Lord, use us as your partners to help transform this world that you love. We ask for these blessings in Jesus' Name. Amen

Transformed Thinking

(30 minutes)

“Transformation”

Read: Change! Transformation! These words are everywhere. We live in a time of tremendous upheaval in relationships, families, politics, the economy, the environment and religion. The pace of technological change continues to amaze. However, at times our world seems to be spinning out of control. There is anxiety, fear, confusion, conflict and wars all around. In the midst of these uncertain days, Christians place their hope in a Savior, Jesus Christ, who is *“... the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8b*

Discuss: Briefly identify some changes that have occurred in the world in the last twenty-five years that have impacted your life.

Read: This firm foundation of faith, even in the midst of uncertainty, stands in contrast to the fact that the Christian life itself is born of radical change. In *II Corinthians 5:17* God’s Word declares, *“If anyone is in Christ they are a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”* On an individual level, this kind of transformation occurs as the message of Jesus touches our hearts, leads to repentance and faith, and we become *“new creations in Christ.”* We often call it conversion. Think of this change as “spiritual transformation” from the inside-out!

Discuss: When you consider your relationship with Jesus, what is “something old” that has passed away in your life and “something new” that has come?

Read: Our personal salvation, coming to faith in Christ, is just the beginning of a growing relationship with Jesus. In *Romans 12:2a* the Apostle Paul urges us to offer our bodies as *“living sacrifices”* to the Lord. This implies offering “everything that we are” and “everything that we have” in service of Jesus Christ. Paul exhorts, *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

Discuss: In what aspect of your daily life do you find it most easy to “conform to the pattern of this world?” (Examples might include: work, entertainment, friends, money.) In this situation, how might a “renewed/transformed mind” respond differently?

Read: The Bible teaches that God loves all of who we are. The life Jesus gives transforms the whole person; spirit, soul and body. Therefore we cannot separate the “sacred” part of our lives from the “secular.” Genuine transformation is an ongoing process that involves every aspect of daily living.

The Apostle Paul describes this new reality to the Corinthian Christians. *“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*
II Corinthians 3:18

Transformed into the likeness of Christ! Wow!! That’s the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in us. Our calling as “believers” is to become “followers” of Jesus that are reflecting his love and presence more and more each day. You see, it’s only as God transforms us that he can use us more fully to transform the world!

Discuss: What is one area of your life where people are seeing “more of Jesus” today than five years ago?

Quote:
“What we embrace about the scope of God’s caring for us not only affects our lives during the 167 hours of the week that we are not in a church service, but it also affects the world around us. God is not with us only when we are sitting in a church pew.” (Silvoso, Transformation, p.20)

Transformation Churches

Read: Translate this individual experience to what we will call a Transformation Church vision. On a congregational level, transformation begins to happen when all the people of God are called and energized to bring the message of Christ to their community and world. A Transformation Church doesn’t settle for the “status quo.” It moves from defense to offense, from maintenance to mission, from fear to faith. In a Transformation Church every “member” becomes a “minister” and an instrument of the transforming power of God in Jesus Christ. Transformation Churches around the world today are characterized by the following commitments:

- 1. Transformation Churches develop transformed followers of Jesus who are being used by God to transform their church, community and world.**
- 2. Transformation Churches partner with the “Church of the City” which is made up of all believers in Christ in their geographic area.**
- 3. Transformation Churches train, equip, commission and release their members to be ministers in the marketplace of everyday life.**

4. **Transformation Churches invest a growing percentage of their resources in mission and ministry beyond their walls with a goal of giving away more than they keep.**
5. **Transformation Churches implement biblical transformation “paradigms and principles” in order to see their cities transformed and the Great Commission fulfilled.**

Discuss: Which of these five characteristics of Transformation Churches is most intriguing to you?

Faith Beyond Belief

Read: Picture in your mind a world where the transforming power of Jesus Christ is significantly impacting every individual, family, church, workplace, school, government, city and nation? Imagine a Christian Church where every local congregation is acting in unity and partnership with other believers to see their city and nation transformed? Contemplate the future of society if every Christian understood who they are in Christ and embraced their calling to be “salt and light” to a dark and hurting world?

Does this sound like the kind of change our world really needs? We’re not talking about just another quick fix, fad diet, government program or broken promise, but rather lasting change that brings real transformation from the inside-out. This is change that is heart deep! But all dreaming aside, the question is, “Can it happen?”

Yes, but this kind of lasting transformation will require Faith Beyond Belief! Faith Beyond Belief moves beyond just believing, to living every day as a transformed follower of Jesus that is being used by God to transform the world. It’s an approach to living the Christian life that involves “stepping-out” of comfortable religion and “stepping-up” to a life of trust and obedience, growth and intimacy with God and with others.

Ed Silvano, President of the International Transformation Network, says, “If you want to see what you’ve never seen before, you must do what you’ve never done before.” During the next seven weeks you will be challenged by God’s Word to “think, believe and act” with Faith Beyond Belief. You will be stretched beyond your comfort zone. You will be challenged to reach-out to the world around you by applying **biblical transformation “paradigms and principles”** to every aspect of your daily life. You will be changed. So will your local church and community. You will experience **Transformed Thinking** and **Transformed Living**, and by God’s grace, you will become a partner in transforming the world!

Discuss: In your relationship with the Lord, what is something that you want to “see that you’ve never seen before or do that you’ve never done before?”

Transformed Living

(30 minutes)

“Transformation”

A Word to Life Groups

Read: You are in for a blessing! A Life Group is just what the words imply. It’s a group of people who make an intentional commitment to share life together. God made us for relationships. A Life Group gives you the opportunity to make new friends, share faith, provide support and work together to see transformation come to your church, community and world.

Life Groups come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Most Life Groups will involve 3-12 members so that everyone can participate fully. Life Groups can be formed by couples, singles, men, women, youth, children, families, interest groups, ministry teams, governing boards, workplace groups and various combinations of any of these.

This Faith Beyond Belief series is designed to provide a 7-week “all church” emphasis that begins with a Sunday sermon and worship theme followed by Life Groups that meet at various times throughout the week. The Life Group sessions build upon the Sunday messages, providing opportunity for further study, reflection and application of the “paradigms and principles” of transformation.

This 7-lesson format will require 2-hour Life Groups Sessions. If your group only has an hour to meet, turn it into a 14-week study by breaking each session between the Transformed Thinking and Transformed Living sections. Adjust as needed with the Life Application Challenges and Daily Devotions.

Regardless of the format that works best for your Life Group, it is strongly recommended that you continue your commitment to one another beyond this series. Transformation is an ongoing process that requires the long-term support and accountability that a Life Group brings. Remember, Jesus says **“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:20** As you meet together you can expect the presence and power of God to be at work!

Discuss: What commitments are important to make to one another for Faith Beyond Belief to be a positive experience for your entire group?

A Word to Life Group Leaders (read separately)

Thank you for serving as a Life Group Leader. You will play an important role in facilitating the study sessions and overseeing details related to the meeting location and hospitality.

Each session is broken up into seven main sections:

- Sharing Life
- Transformed Thinking
- Transformed Living
- Life Application Challenges
- Prayer Support
- Details
- Devotions

Within each of these sections there are simple directions provided in bold print, such as **Read, Discuss, Quote, Summary**. As you prepare, please review the session in advance and determine how you want to facilitate each section. For example, what will you read as the leader, ask others to read, or read as a whole group? How will you draw out discussion among all the members of your group? How will you monitor the clock and keep things moving?

You will discover that there is a minimum of “direction giving” in order to provide the greatest flexibility to your Life Group. As the Life Group Leader it is your responsibility to keep the sessions flowing within the designated time frame for each section so that the group doesn’t bog down on any one point. You will not have time to dwell on each discussion question. Once there have been several good answers, move on to the next question or section to read or discuss. At the same time, be flexible and open to “Holy Spirit moments” and “God surprises.”

If refreshments are served, it is suggested that this be done as Life Group members first gather, as a brief break between the Transformed Thinking and Transformed Living sections, or at the end of the session. This is a deeper study. It will require an average of 2 hours of concentrated group time for each session, excluding gathering time and refreshments.

To be effective, each session must be bathed in prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. You are encouraged to pray for your Life Group members every day. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom in facilitating each session to gain maximum participation and impact for the kingdom of God. As you share life together, the Lord will open up many opportunities for ministry to take place within your Life Group. Remind your group of the importance of confidentiality when personal matters are shared. Help create a fun and accepting atmosphere of growing together in Christ.

In order for the transformation “paradigms and principles” to go deep in the lives of your group members, they must first experience their application within the safety of the Life Group. This will give them the courage and confidence to apply these truths in other areas of their lives. That’s why the Life Application Challenges are a critical part of the Faith Beyond Belief series. Help create a fun culture of accountability in your Life Group regarding these weekly challenges. The same is true for the Daily Devotions.

Your pastor or Life Group Coordinator may provide additional orientation and training that responds to your local needs. There is a great variety of resources available today for the equipping of Life Group Leaders. Thanks again for serving as a Life Group Leader and may God bless your time together!

Series Overview and Schedule

Read: The Faith Beyond Belief Series (as designed for congregational use) includes:

- Weekly Worship and Sermon Series
- Weekly Life Group Sessions (2 hours)
- Life Application Challenges
- Daily Devotions including Scripture Reading and Prayer

Worship and Sermon Series themes focus on the “5 Biblical Paradigms of Nation Transformation” that lead to **Transformed Thinking**. The foundational teaching for these paradigms comes from the book “Transformation” by Ed Silvano (Regal Books, 2007).

A consistent worship life is foundational to personal transformation. Life Group participants are encouraged to be faithful in weekly worship. The Worship/Sermon Series titles and the Transformed Thinking section themes are:

- Week One Transformation
- Week Two Paradigm #1 - Discipling Nations
- Week Three Paradigm #2 - Reclamation Project
- Week Four Paradigm #3 - Marketplace Ministry
- Week Five Paradigm #4 - Kingdom Builders
- Week Six Paradigm #5 - Systemic Poverty
- Week Seven Transformed Thinking and Transformed Living

Life Group Sessions focus on the “Principles of Prayer Evangelism” from Luke, chapter 10. The daily application of these principles leads to **Transformed Living**. The foundational teaching for these principles comes from the book “Prayer Evangelism” by Ed Silvano (Regal Books, 2000).

Life Groups will meet at various times and locations throughout the week following each of the Sunday “kick-off” messages. The Transformed Living section themes are:

- Session One Transformation
- Session Two Prayer Evangelism and You
- Session Three Principle #1 – Bless and Speak Peace
- Session Four Principle #2 – Fellowship and Build Relationships
- Session Five Principle #3 – Minister and Respond to Felt Needs
- Session Six Principle #4 – Proclaim the Good News
- Session Seven Transformed Thinking and Transformed Living

Life Application Challenges allow each person to take the key biblical “paradigm and principle” of the week and apply them immediately to their daily life. This application may occur in the home, neighborhood, workplace, school, shopping center, place of recreation or church lobby. Near the end of each session you will be provided with *Personal... Group... and Faith Beyond Belief* (optional) Life Application Challenges. By implementing these challenges throughout the week you will develop practical life skills, your confidence and testimony will grow, and you will be used by God to bring transformation to your Circles of Influence.

Daily Devotions including Scripture Reading and Prayer provide the foundation for ongoing personal transformation. Life Group participants are encouraged to incorporate this “good habit” into their daily routine. A weekly reading plan is included with each session along with questions for reflection.

Quotes from the books “Transformation” and “Prayer Evangelism” by Ed Silvano are included in each session with appropriate citation. Participants are encouraged to read these books in their entirety to gain greater knowledge and application of the transformation paradigms and principles being discussed.

Scripture Quotations in this series are taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Holy Bible (International Bible Society, 1973, 1978, 1984) unless otherwise noted. They are typed in bold italics. Any underlining has been added to bring emphasis.

(Note: Sermon resources for pastors are available on-line at www.transformourworld.org in both audio and transcript format.)

Life Application Challenges

(20 minutes)

Read: Your first *Personal* Life Application Challenge is to establish a daily discipline of devotions and prayer this coming week. Use the Daily Devotions schedule at the end of this session to help you prepare for the transformation that God will bring into your life during the next seven weeks.

Your *Group* Life Application Challenge is to complete the Roster information for your Life Group on the page provided near the front of this workbook. (Please pause and complete this task as a group right now.)

You may also want to create a “group email” or other means of staying connected for announcements and support throughout the week. Assign this task to someone in your Life Group.

Now, make it a point to really get to know the names of your Life Group members so that next week you can call everyone by name.

Your *Faith Beyond Belief* Optional Challenge is to acquire and begin to read Ed Silvano’s book, “Transformation.” (Regal Books, 2007) This book may be available through your local congregation, bookstore or Life Group Leader.

Quote:

“This book is about transformation and the paradigms and principles that undergird it. Transformation does not happen in a vacuum. It is brought about by people who have tapped into a well of resolve and a sense of purpose deep and powerful enough to enable them to overcome the ominous and menacing challenges that stand at its gates like intimidating guardians.” (Silvano, Transformation, p.15)

Prayer Support

(15 minutes)

Every week you will be encouraged to take a few moments to share personal prayer requests within your group. Go ahead and do that now. You may write them down here:

Now, close with a group prayer for these needs and continue to include them in your prayers throughout the week.

Details

(5 minutes)

Finalize any details with your Host/Leader and Life Group members. Remember to share responsibilities, especially refreshments and childcare as needed.

Our next Life Group Session is:

Date:

Location:

Time:

Remember to bring:

Daily Devotions

Read: It is important for your Christian growth to cultivate a daily routine of personal Bible study, reflection and prayer. The best and most optimal results of transformation will be yours by giving your mind and spirit as much fuel as possible. Below you will find some passages of scripture for each day of the coming week starting with Day One tomorrow. These passages connect with the Faith Beyond Belief session you have just completed.

Establish a time for these daily devotions that is consistent and workable with your lifestyle. What will work best for you; morning, noon, or evening? Begin your devotional time with prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate your reading of God's Word. Read the scripture, perhaps more than once. Reflect on the questions and others that will come to your mind. Consider applications to your daily life.

Then, take a longer time in prayer. Come before the Lord with confession, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for the needs in your personal life, family, church and community. Take time to listen as well. *Psalm 46:10* says, ***“Be still and know that I am God.”*** The time frame for these daily devotions may vary from 10 or 15 minutes to an hour or more as your prayer life deepens. Be disciplined, but let the Lord lead. Know that others are praying for you as well.

Day One – Psalm 1

What personal evidence can you attest to that there is benefit in “delighting in the law of the Lord” rather than “standing in the way of sinners?” Reflect on how God might be calling you to grow right now like the tree described in verse 3.

Day Two – Jeremiah 29:10-14

God has a plan and purpose for your life. What promises do his plans include? Is there an experience in your past that feels to you like “banishment and exile?” Ask God for forgiveness and restoration. Ask him to bring you back home and give you hope for the future.

Day Three – Matthew 3:13-17

Why do you think that Jesus chose to be baptized even though he was without sin? Where do you see the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this text? What does it mean to you that God speaks these same words of affirmation (vs. 17) to all his children?

Day Four – II Chronicles 7:11-22

What are the conditions placed on Solomon for retaining the Lord's blessing? Is it possible that God's love for us is unconditional but that his blessing and protection is conditioned by our willingness to pray, seek his face and follow his ways? What does God want to teach you today?

Day Five – II Corinthians 4:7-18

What challenges are you facing in your life right now? Do not lose heart! God is for you! How can you “fix your eyes” on Jesus to see beyond the problem to the ways that God is working? Pray for that focus today.

Day Six – Genesis 12:1-9

What might God be calling you to leave behind right now in order to follow him more closely? What kind of a legacy would you like to leave some day for future generations? Worship Jesus and give him thanks for the blessings in your life. Enjoy the journey of Faith Beyond Belief.

Day Seven – Your Life Group meets today!

