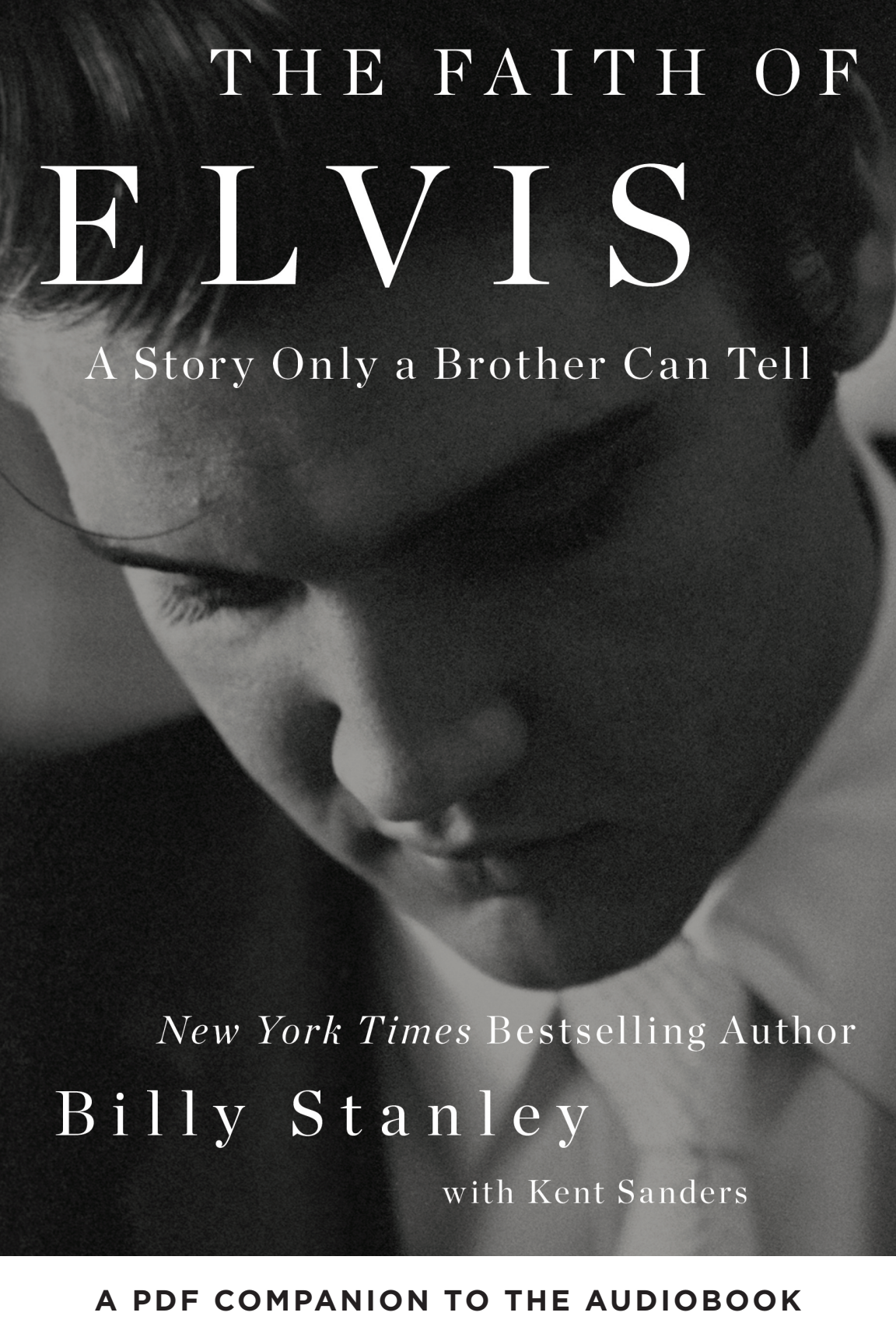




THE FAITH OF ELVIS

A Story Only a Brother Can Tell

New York Times Bestselling Author

Billy Stanley

with Kent Sanders

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

The Faith of Elvis

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**This is my birth father,
William J. Stanley Sr.**



Our family portrait in 1955



Another family portrait in 1956



Rick, David, and me in Orléans, France, in 1957



At the Audubon Drive house in 1957



Mom, Grandma Presley,
and Vernon at Christmas in 1959



Vernon and Mom's wedding
on July 3, 1960



Mom, Rick, David,
and me on our way
to our new home,
Graceland, in 1960



Rick, David, and me with Vernon, our new dad, in 1960



Rick, David, and me on the outside looking in



Graceland Elementary in second grade, me on bottom row, far left



Priscilla, Mom, and Vernon at the house on Hermitage Drive in 1962



Going swimming at Graceland in 1963 with Elvis's cousin, Paul Wayne



From left to right: David, Vernon, Mom, me,
and Rick on Easter Sunday in 1964



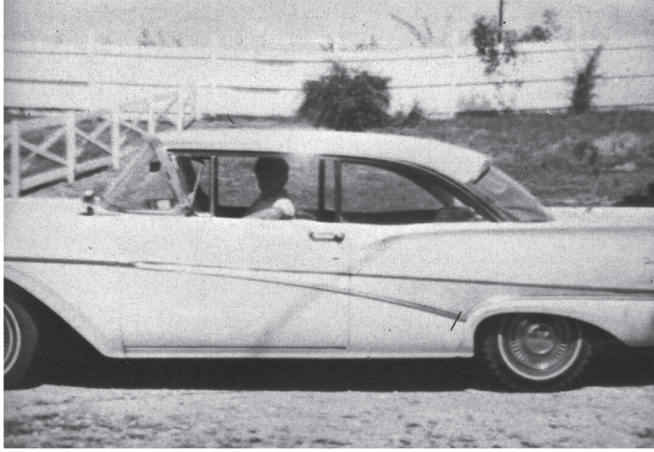
On the movie set of *Speedway* with Nancy Sinatra and Nelson Rockefeller



Elvis and Priscilla's wedding reception at Graceland in 1967



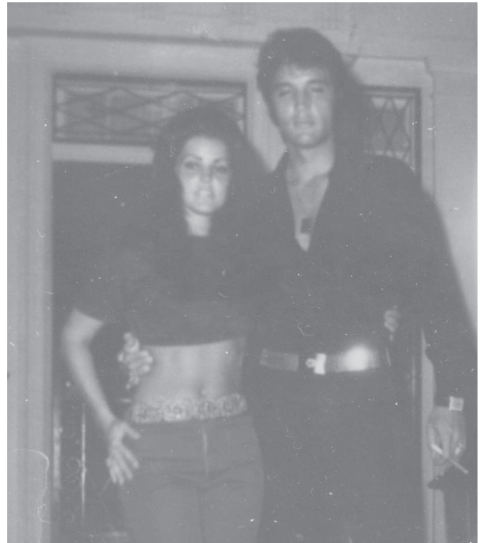
Three proud uncles greeting Lisa Marie when she came home from the hospital in 1968



My car in the backyard at Graceland



Elvis with Mom's brother, Richard, in 1968



Priscilla and Elvis in 1968



Elvis with our cousin, Teresa, in 1968



Rick and Lisa Marie playing in the backyard of the Dolan house in 1969



Vernon, David, Rick, and me in the backyard of the Dolan house



At an Elvis concert in Las Vegas in 1970



Rick and me in our high school yearbook in 1970



David, Rick, and me on Easter Sunday in 1971

THE FAITH OF ELVIS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

We hope you have enjoyed reading and learning about Elvis's faith and love for God. We don't want your journey to stop there. The greatest tribute you can give to Elvis's legacy of faith is to put these principles into practice in your own life.

You can use the discussion questions below in a variety of ways:

- Use them as journaling prompts in your personal devotion time.
- Read through the book with a group and discuss a set of questions each week.
- Include them as discussion starters in a class, small group, or mastermind where you are engaging with the book.
- Post your answers on social media and invite others to discuss and comment.

However you use them, we hope these questions spur you on to a greater appreciation of Elvis's legacy as well as a deeper love for Jesus.

Introduction

1. What was your impression of Elvis's faith before reading this book?
2. Can you think of any popular recording artists who include gospel music in the middle of their concerts? Why would that seem strange?
3. Billy wrote, "This is what Elvis wanted more than anything: for people to know God and come to faith in Jesus." Would you say that is your greatest desire as well? Why or why not?

Chapter 1: Mansion Over the Hilltop

1. Imagine yourself in Billy and his brothers' shoes that first night at Graceland. How would you have felt?
2. Does it surprise you that Elvis was so excited to become a big brother? Why or why not? How does that differ from the image of Elvis in pop culture?
3. Elvis made Billy and his brothers feel special, needed, and wanted that first night when he prayed with them. Is there someone in your life you are praying for in the same way?
4. James 1:22-24 talks about not being just a listener to the Word, but a doer of it. How did Elvis put God's Word into practice by welcoming Billy and his brothers into his life?

Chapter 2: He Knows Just What I Need

1. Billy wrote, "The person you saw on the screen or at concerts was the same person you saw at Graceland. Elvis was every bit of the fun-loving, warm, caring person you'd expect him to be, and then some." Did this statement surprise you? Why or why not?

2. Elvis felt so close to God that God knew his name, and Elvis knew God's. If someone asked you what it meant to be close to God, how would you explain it?
3. Billy wrote that faith was one of the many gifts Elvis gave him. Who helped give *you* the gift of faith? Is there someone in your life whose faith you are helping to develop?
4. Proverbs 6:22 says, "When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you." The Word of God guided and changed Elvis's and Billy's lives. How is God's Word guiding and speaking to you now?

Chapter 3: You'll Never Walk Alone

1. Billy learned to think bigger in the setting of family and laughter. How important is a sense of security and fun to a child's healthy development?
2. Elvis told Billy, "Don't worry about failing. If you don't accomplish what you set out to do, be proud that you gave it everything you had, that you left nothing to chance." Why is this important advice for a young person?
3. How would you have felt in Billy's shoes when he was getting musical advice from Elvis? Who in your life has helped you gain confidence in your creative abilities?

Chapter 4: In My Father's House

1. Why is it so important to have a steady father figure in a young man's life?
2. Proverbs 1:8–9 says, "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to

grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” What is the most important thing your mother or father taught you?

3. Do you think it was hard for Vernon to become a father figure to three young boys who were not biologically his own? Why or why not?
4. Describe a few ways you try to make your home a safe and welcoming place for your family.

Chapter 5: Somebody Bigger Than You and I

1. Put yourself in Billy’s shoes. What would it have been like to be part of a new family and discover that your new brother was world-famous?
2. First Peter 5:6–7 says, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” What are the challenges to staying humble when you are famous?
3. Elvis felt his career was just a job like any other person had. How did this view help keep him humble and grounded?
4. Who is the most famous person you have ever met? Did you get the sense that he or she was grounded and humble? Why or why not?

Chapter 6: I’ll Be Home for Christmas

1. If you were in Elvis’s shoes and had access to virtually anything you wanted, would it be difficult to keep the focus on Jesus during Christmas? Why or why not?
2. What is the most meaningful Christmas gift you ever received? What made it special?

3. How do you try to keep the focus on Jesus during the Christmas season?
4. Titus 3:4–5 says, “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” As you are reading Billy’s story, do you see ways Elvis showed God’s kindness and love to him and his brothers?
5. Billy wrote, “The only difference between Christmas and any other day with Elvis was that we had a tree at Christmas.” What is something simple you can do to make someone else’s day “like Christmas” today?

Chapter 7: It Is No Secret (What God Can Do)

1. Does it surprise you that Elvis only won Grammy Awards for his gospel music?
2. In this chapter, Billy emphasizes that Elvis saw his gospel music not as a performance, but as a calling and a ministry. He writes, “Elvis saw himself as a gospel singer who just happened to sing rock and roll and star in movies.” How does this change your view of Elvis?
3. Near Psalm 137 in his Bible, Elvis wrote, “The highest graces of music flow from the feelings of the heart-soul.” How does music draw you closer to God? Are there any particular gospel songs by Elvis that you love?
4. Do you view your career or vocation as a calling from God? Why or why not?

Chapter 8: He Touched Me

1. Proverbs 11:25 says, “A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” What are some ways the Lord has refreshed you when you have been generous to others?
2. Elvis wrote in his Bible, “If one can’t give what they have and share then they will always be empty.” Why did giving seem to make Elvis so happy?
3. Billy told a story about Elvis giving money to a complete stranger on the street. Have you ever given money to a stranger? What happened as a result?
4. Think of people who have been generous to you. How did it change or improve your life? How did it increase your faith?
5. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, “God loves a cheerful giver.” Why does God love it when a person gives cheerfully?

Chapter 9: Oh Happy Day

1. Colossians 3:23–24 says: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” What are some ways you work at your job or position with all your heart? How do you try to honor the Lord through it?
2. Elvis truly loved his fans. Does it change your perspective of his music, knowing that he had such a deep appreciation for his fans?
3. Billy wrote that Elvis “would always take the conversation off him and put it onto the other person.” How do you think this made the other person feel? Is it harder for us to give our full attention to someone today than it was in Elvis’s time?

Chapter 10: Where No One Stands Alone

1. John 13:34 says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” Elvis lived out this command by standing up to racial injustice and by treating others equally. What are three ways you can live out this command in your own life?
2. If Elvis had gotten to meet Martin Luther King Jr., what do you think they would have talked about?
3. Billy wrote, “Elvis didn’t care where you were from or who you were. He treated everybody who worked for him the same.” Do you treat everyone in your care the same, whether family, employees, or team members?

Chapter 11: By and By

1. Did it surprise you to learn that Elvis wanted to be done with making movies and get back to performing live concerts? Why or why not?
2. Even though Elvis wanted to be done with making movies long before he was, he honored his contracts. Is there a difficult situation you are dealing with right now that requires patience? How can you act with integrity and honor your commitments while still aiming for your goals?
3. Elvis wrote a note to himself in his Bible. It said, “There is a season for everything, patience will reward you and reveal the answers to your questions.” As you look back on challenging situations in your past, how did patience reward you?
4. Isaiah 40:30–31 says, “Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will

renew their strength.” How did you see the Lord renewing Elvis’s strength during this period of his life?

Chapter 12: Stand by Me

1. How does a Christian balance Jesus’ command to “turn the other cheek” with the need to stand up to bullies by using force (see Matthew 5:38–40)?
2. Proverbs 17:17 says, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” Who is a “brother” or “sister” you can call on when times get tough?
3. Has anyone ever stood up for you? How did it make you feel?
4. How have you stood up for others who were being bullied or mistreated?

Chapter 13: I’ve Got Confidence

1. Elvis took special care to train and mentor Billy. How do you see a similar mentoring relationship played out in stories from the Bible, such as Paul and Timothy, Jesus and the disciples, or Moses and Joshua?
2. Proverbs 13:20 says, “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.” Who in your inner circle is wise? How can you spend more time with them?
3. Think of one or two people who gave you confidence and skills in your vocation or career. What specific ways did they help you grow as a person or leader?

Chapter 14: Swing Down, Sweet Chariot

1. Elvis and Billy bonded over driving fast cars. Think about someone in your life whom you are mentoring or teaching. What hobby or activity do you use to strengthen your bond and provide learning experiences?
2. Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” Who are you “sharpening”? How are you making that person better?
3. After hearing Billy’s experience getting into a fast car with Elvis, would you have liked to ride along? Why or why not?
4. What can we learn about respecting law enforcement from the story of Elvis getting pulled over by the policeman?

Chapter 15: Lead Me, Guide Me

1. Billy wrote, “Much of what has been said and written over the years about Elvis’s philandering has been overblown to the extent that it has in some ways defined who he was. This is not a fair way to look at anyone’s life.” None of us want to be defined by our mistakes. Why do we seem so quick to do this to celebrities?
2. Matthew 7:1–2 says, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” How do these verses help you stay away from judging others inappropriately?
3. Elvis wrote in his Bible, “To judge a man by his weakest link or deed is like judging the power of the ocean by one wave.” What is your “weakest link”? Would you want the world to define you by that one aspect of your life?

4. Is there an area of your life where you're currently struggling with sin? How can you let God's grace into your heart to cover over your guilt and shame?

Chapter 16: If the Lord Wasn't Walking by My Side

1. Have you ever faced a situation like the one described at the beginning of the chapter, where Elvis dealt with the unruly diner customer? How did Elvis show his love for people by protecting them from harm in various situations?
2. Elvis often wrote reminders or Scripture verses in the margins of his Bible, such as "Lord send me light to guide me" and "Trust in the Lord not man." Describe a current situation in your life where you need God's light and wisdom. Have you asked God for guidance?
3. Romans 12:17-18 says, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Is there someone in your life who has done you harm? How can you attempt to live at peace with them instead of repaying them for what they have done?

Chapter 17: America, the Beautiful

1. Elvis said, "That's why it's so important that your generation keeps God as the foundation of our great country, Billy. Never lose that." What does it mean in practical ways to keep God as the foundation of a country?
2. Romans 13:1 says, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." How should a Christian respond when the governing

authorities don't follow godly principles? What would Elvis do in this situation?

3. Elvis believed that the purpose of music was not to make political statements. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Chapter 18: Run On

1. Did you previously know about the story of Elvis getting a DEA badge? If not, what was your reaction to learning about it?
2. Elvis said, "All my heroes wear uniforms." Who is someone in your life who wears a uniform, and what do you admire about them?
3. James 2 talks about the importance of both faith and deeds. Think over your activities and schedule from this past week. How have you shown your faith by your actions, your calendar, and your priorities? How can you show your faith by your deeds over the coming week?
4. Billy referred to the industry of Elvis tribute artists—otherwise known as Elvis impersonators. If there were tribute artists dedicated to *your* life, what would they look or sound like? What personality or character qualities would they try to highlight?

Chapter 19: How Great Thou Art

1. Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." Elvis tried to put this idea into practice through singing gospel music. How can you put it into practice in your life? How can you make the gospel known through your vocation, reputation, or relationships?

2. It was, and still is, very unusual for a rock or pop artist to perform gospel songs in his or her shows. How do you think people would respond to that if Elvis were alive and making music today?
3. Elvis believed spiritual truth could come through “secular” songs such as “Bridge over Troubled Water.” What non-gospel songs do you enjoy that have a deep spiritual meaning to you?

Chapter 20: Amazing Grace

1. This chapter mentioned the parable of the talents, found in Matthew 25. What is the biggest talent or skill God has given you? How can you use it for his glory?
2. Since you’re reading this book, you are likely an Elvis fan. As you have listened to his music over the years, did you get a clear sense of the message of God’s love coming through?
3. Billy wrote, “Elvis was the same person onstage and off. There was no difference.” That is a remarkable statement, since Elvis was the biggest celebrity of his time. Could people say the same thing about you—that you are the same person in your public and private lives?
4. John 16:33 says, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” God can comfort you in your troubles, just as he helped Elvis. What strength or comfort do you need to ask God for today?

Chapter 21: Help Me

1. Elvis was concerned that he stay spiritually grounded even while he was a wealthy celebrity. He wrote in his Bible, “For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or

be cast away” (quoting Luke 9:25 KJV). How do you stay grounded in your faith while also living in a time of unprecedented wealth and material abundance?

2. Billy wrote, “Elvis just took it all in stride and didn’t get hung up on what people did to him. He didn’t keep emotional scorecards, on other people or himself.” Do you tend to keep emotional scorecards on those who have hurt you? Be honest.
3. Imagine yourself in Elvis’s shoes. How might you have handled the fame, power, and wealth? Where would you have been the most tempted?

Chapter 22: Farther Along

1. Like Paul in Philippians 3:8, do you consider “everything a loss” compared to the “surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus”? What makes it so hard sometimes to value our relationship with Christ above all else?
2. How do you know when you are drawing closer to God? Be specific.
3. Elvis dealt with many obstacles to his faith and success. One of them was Colonel Parker, who gave him his big break as a young performer but became a liability as the years went on. Is there anyone in your life that you consider an obstacle? How would God have you handle this situation?
4. How would you have responded if Elvis had asked *you* to be the one to share his real story? Would it feel like an immense pressure? A great responsibility? A huge honor? All three?

Chapter 23: Known Only to Him

1. Billy said, “[Elvis] taught me that life is a gift from God. We should thank God for that every day. When we’re gone, we’re gone. There is no encore, so we have to do what we can do while we’re here on this earth.” How does this inspire you to live every day to its fullest?
2. How did you respond to the story of Elvis’s mother’s ghost walking around Graceland?
3. Think about a loved one in your life. If you knew today was the last time you would speak with him or her, what would you say?
4. Psalm 90:12 says, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” When you understand that your time on earth is limited, how does it help you be wise in how you spend your time?

Chapter 24: If We Never Meet Again

1. Have you ever lost someone close to you unexpectedly? Who helped comfort you on that day?
2. Can you picture an older Elvis? What might he look like? What kind of music or entertainment might he be making if he were still alive?
3. In the margin of his Bible, Elvis copied Psalms 46:10, which says, “Be still, and know that I am God.” How does “being still” help us have peace in times of grief, stress, or sadness?

Chapter 25: Seeing Is Believing

1. How did you respond to Billy's account of seeing Elvis in heaven? Have you ever had such an experience, or known someone who has?
2. Several people in Billy's life, including his wife, Liz, and his brothers, Rick and David, were instrumental in bringing him back to the Lord. Who has had the most influence in your life, helping you have a strong relationship with Jesus? Have you told them how they impacted you?
3. How do the words from Revelation 21 about "a new heaven and a new earth" give you comfort and peace concerning what God has prepared for us?

Chapter 26: A Thing Called Love

1. In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul wrote, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." When your closest friends and family think of your life, would *love* be one of the first words they would associate with you? Why or why not?
2. Do you take life for granted, or do you make the most of every day? Be honest.
3. Billy once told Elvis, "You are always positive, motivating, and inspirational with everyone you talk to. I've listened to you and watched how you are with people. You make everyone who comes in contact with you feel special." Is there someone in your life who makes you feel the same way? Have you told them so?