

News Story Summary

On April 18, 14-year-old Jennifer Lee Willis failed to return home after school. However, she was found alive and well the next day. Then, in May, she disappeared again, but this time, she has not been found. Jennifer's disappearance has emotionally drained family members. They faithfully pray for her safe return. Her father, Lee Allen Willis recently said, "Until Jennifer is back in here, life is at a standstill. You try to be productive, but you just get by."

The Houston Police Department reported that the Willis family is not alone. In April, two-thirds of the 566 reported lost and missing people were children. The cases included 157 missing juveniles, 231 runaway minors, and 178 missing adults. Though many of the children are not found alive, Jennifer's mom said, "She'll be back. I'm going to see my baby again."

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase "missing Jennifer Willis.")

Focus Attention

To supplement the discussion for Psalm 42:9-11, share the news story, then ask group members to describe the state of the Willis' home. Explain that unfulfilled human longings can create despair and depression. Ask: *What makes being separate from someone you love so difficult?*

In Psalm 42, King David expressed the longings of his heart to be in God's presence again.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Summarize and Challenge ideas, remind the group of the news article. Ask: *How would a person's faith in God and prayer impact their approach to a difficult situation?* Reemphasize that despite the turmoil of David's life, he placed his hope in God and continued to worship Him. Take time to encourage group members who may be facing despair as a family. Encourage them to read verses on God's goodness, such as 1 Timothy 4:4; Psalm 145:9; and James 1:17, and reflect on them. Encourage them to, like David, put their hope in God and praise Him, even while going through difficulties.