

**BIG IDEA**

When you feel overwhelmed,  
God takes care of you.

**BIBLE**

1 Kings 19:1–9; Psalm 4:8;  
Matthew 11:28–30

**ABOUT THIS WEEK**

Each level of a video game comes with its own unique challenges, and life can feel a lot like that, too. This week, we'll look at a time when Elijah faced so many challenges that he felt completely overwhelmed and needed to take a break. From this story, you will see that **when you feel overwhelmed, God takes care of you.**

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

**POLL | Video Game Marathon**

- Welcome back to our series, *Restart*, where we will talk about moments we wish our lives had a restart button like a video game. Some games are too difficult for us. We get stuck and overwhelmed by how to make it through. So, I'm curious—what games do you find overwhelming, and which ones could you play for hours?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Poll your group's responses to the following questions. For each question, invite them to respond by cheering, raising their hands, or moving to different sides of the room you designate for each option. Choose games that work for the culture of your group. We have included a few options to get your imagination going.*
  - **If you had to eliminate one video game from existence, which one would it be?** *Options: Pac-Man, The Legend of Zelda, Minecraft*
  - **What would you choose if you could only play one video game for a year?** *Options: League of Legends, Hogwarts Legacy, Super Smash Bros.*
  - **If you had to choose one game to play for 24 hours straight, which would you choose?** *Options: Roblox, Mario Kart, Fortnite*
- I don't know about you, but I'm overwhelmed by the idea of playing video games for 24 hours straight. I'm sure some of you would be awesome at it, but for me, life seems overwhelming enough without thinking about everything I would get behind on if I stopped my life for 24 hours.
- Some of you feel inundated with everything life throws at you, and games are a time to take a break! If there are times when video games do not help us through, what do we do when life feels overwhelming?

**DISCUSSION**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups.*
  - **When are you most likely to play video games? When you're bored? Trying to avoid something? When your friends are playing? Or never—you would rather do anything else than play a video game?**
  - **How would you describe the feeling of being overwhelmed?**

**ACTIVITY | IRL Mario Bros.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this game, you will need three [square balloons](#) in different colors and something to blow them up. Before your program, fill up four balloons for each team. Write a question mark on these balloons like the [Mario Brothers question block](#). Pick three volunteers to play, and have three more adult volunteers help keep score. To play, give each teen one balloon and tell them the game's goal is to keep the balloon in the air, bouncing off their hands, feet, and head so it doesn't touch the ground. Every hit gives them ten points. After fifteen seconds, a volunteer will throw in another balloon that they must keep up with the first balloon. Add balloons every fifteen seconds until four balloons are in the air. A player gets out if any of their four balloons hits the ground. After all the players have gotten out, add the points, and the one with the most points wins. For a bonus, use a Mario soundboard [like this](#) to play Mario sounds as they play. You could even play the Mario theme as they play. For more information, [read this!](#) [Here's a link](#) to preview the song for your personal use..
- That was chaos! Maybe your life right now feels a lot like the balloon game. You're trying to keep a bunch of balloons in the air without them crashing to the ground, except the balloons are...
  - Homework, projects, and tests.
  - Sports and extracurricular activities.
  - Relationships with friends and family.
  - Responsibilities within your family or outside your family.
- And right when you think you've done a good job of keeping one balloon in the air, another one gets added in, and it feels like too much. Life can be so overwhelming it feels like we are out of control. What can we do when we have so much going on, and it feels like something is about to drop? Is there someone who will help us?

**SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?

**VIDEO | The Bible Project: Books of 1–2 Kings Summary**

- There's a story in the Bible of a man named Elijah who had every reason to feel overwhelmed. He was a prophet who heard from God and then delivered the message to God's people. His story is full of wild moments that would daze even the best of us. Here are just a few of his stories.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip that helps contextualize the book of 1 Kings, [like this one from the Bible Project](#) (4:50–5:29), which talks about Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context! For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Elijah was at the top. But even with Elijah being a top player, he still got overwhelmed. Right after God answers Elijah's prayer to rain down fire from heaven, like Mario throwing fireballs, something unexpected happens.

**SCRIPTURE | 1 Kings 19:1–4**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 1 Kings 19:1–4.
- I've never had royalty threaten my life, but I can assume it's not a pleasant experience. Now Elijah has a king and queen coming after him. He had just gotten done trusting God would show up in a big way and saw God's incredible display of power. But now, his life is in danger.
- Maybe you relate to what Elijah is going through. So many times in our lives, we wrap up one big thing, but suddenly, it feels like another thing is added to the list.
  - You made it through one hectic week with final exams or homework assignments, but the teacher added a huge project.
  - You got placed on the team you've been working hard for, but now your training has doubled, and

you need time for extra workouts.

- You finally stabilize one shaky friendship, but then another friend stops talking to you, and you don't know why.
- Your family celebrates getting through a difficult time together, but then you find out a close family member is sick.
- We all have had moments where we feel we're on top of our game. We've handled every boss level, and it's a miracle we made it through. But somehow, we're still overwhelmed by everything life throws at us.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - ✪ **What is your go-to way of coping with feeling overwhelmed?**
  - **Have you ever told God, "I've had enough," like Elijah did? If you feel comfortable sharing, what led to you praying that?**

## SCRIPTURE | 1 Kings 19:5–9

- Sometimes, I think God will come in with a five-part rescue plan that addresses every one of my concerns. But often, God knows a simpler solution.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Kings 19:5–9.*
- Elijah felt like it was game over, and there was no way he could hit continue. Elijah was overwhelmed, and God gave him exactly what he needed: a nap, a snack, and time to recover.
- It's like God told Elijah, "I got this. Let's unplug." It's cool to notice what God did for Elijah, but did you also see what God didn't do?
  - God didn't tell Elijah to suck it up and move on.
  - God didn't shame Elijah or put him down.
  - God didn't push Elijah in this moment, making him keep going even though he was exhausted. God let Elijah rest and gave him a snack. God let him rest again and brought him another snack. I don't know about you, but when someone offers me snacks and a nap, I always feel much better!

## OBJECT LESSON | Unplug The Console

- Have you ever noticed when a video game, an app on your phone, a computer, or a device needs a restart? For me, it's usually at the worst time, like when I'm about to beat a level and press that one button like my life depends on it, but the game freaks out, the screen gets fuzzy, and poor Mario looks like he needs a nap.
- Maybe for you, it's when you're about to hit send on a college application or finally hit purchase on that one thing your parents gave you permission to get, and the app glitches. Or maybe it's when you finish typing that 12-page paper due in the morning, and your computer freezes, throwing you into full panic mode.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you'll need a video game console or some electronic device. If you can't find a video game console, a computer, or an electronic device, your phone can work. As you're teaching, hold or set the device near you to show the beauty of unplugging or getting a restart. As you are teaching, say ...*
- Sometimes, the console needs a restart. And the best way for that to happen is to unplug completely. The first step to troubleshooting an overwhelmed device is unplugging it—this type of restart may be what you need.
- The next time you are swamped, this story shows that maybe you just need to unplug the console. When we're overwhelmed, it's easy to think we need to work harder for our problems to disappear. But sometimes, God knows that a nap, a snack, and a time to recover are what's best.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - ✪ **Have you ever thought you could be as honest with God as Elijah was? How does the idea of being that honest with God make you feel?**
  - ✪ **How did God relate to Elijah when he was overwhelmed? What does that tell you about how God relates to you?**

## SCRIPTURE | Psalm 4:8

- If we are feeling overwhelmed, sometimes all we need to do is do our best computer impression and simply unplug. When we do what Elijah did and rest, letting God take care of us can help us restart and have a fresh perspective on what's overwhelming us, and we can tackle it with fresh energy, knowing God is with us. The writer of a poem in the Psalms put what Elijah experienced in such a simple way. Take a look.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 4:8.*
- Sometimes, this is precisely what you need when you are overwhelmed. You need to rest and allow God to be the one that sustains and protects you. You don't need to push through, you don't need to try to carry more, you don't need to exhaust yourself. Just be close and allow God to support you. **When you feel overwhelmed, God takes care of you.**

*NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?*

## OBJECT LESSON | Restart Button

- Our lives may not have the same drama that Elijah's did, but that doesn't change the fact life can be overwhelming. We have goals, responsibilities, and expectations to manage, which is a lot to carry. Like Elijah, God wants to care for and help you when you are overwhelmed. Here are a few ways the story of Elijah shows us how to restart when we have moments like this.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, set up the restart button you decided to use throughout this series. Head to the "Restart Button Object Lesson" module in Week One for suggestions on how to build a restart button for this module. At the end of this teaching section, hit the restart button. As you are teaching, say...*
  - **LET GOD KNOW YOU'RE OVERWHELMED:** God didn't shame Elijah when he told God he was overwhelmed. God's response to Elijah's shows us we can be honest with God, too. Next time you feel overwhelmed, write out what makes you feel this way, talk to God about it in prayer, and then picture God coming alongside you, saying, "It's okay. I've got this."
  - **LET GOD TAKE CARE OF YOU:** What would it look like for God to care for you right now? Is it sleep, help, advice, peace, or a math tutor? It could be anything! When we're overwhelmed, we need to remind ourselves that God loves us, wants to take care of us, and deeply cares for us. This week, when you need that reminder, read Psalm 4:8 and ask God for what you need. If you don't have access to the care you need, talk to one of us here. We would love to be part of how God cares for you.
  - **LET GOD'S WORDS MATTER MOST:** Even though Elijah had a great relationship with God when Queen Jezebel threatened his life, it seemed like he forgot everything God had done. Elijah didn't forget this on purpose. Something happened that caused him to lose sight of all God has done. But when Elijah unplugged and let God take care of him, God's words spoke louder than anything else. When you feel overwhelmed this week, take 30 minutes to unplug and connect with God because **when you feel overwhelmed, God takes care of you.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Matthew 11:28–30. Have you felt pressure to do more for God? How does knowing that Jesus invites you to rest change the way you see God?**
  - ★ **What keeps you from trusting that God takes care of you when you are overwhelmed? What's one thing you can do to address that barrier this week?**

## PRAYER | Unplug

- When we're overwhelmed, our minds and bodies send us a message to check ourselves. One way we can do this is to be still, focus on our breath, and pray.
- You may have never been shown how to connect with God in moments like this. So, here is a simple prayer practice you can do to let God care for you when you are overwhelmed. Let's try that together.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite teenagers to pray quietly, with the room silent. Have them turn off their phone, sit with their feet on the ground, close their eyes, and focus on their breath. As they breathe in, encourage them to say, "My God," and as they breathe out, say, "Take care of me." Try this for four to five minutes.*
- Because God is always with you, you can practice this prayer whenever things feel too much because **when you feel overwhelmed, God takes care of you.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - ★ **What's one thing you can do for a person in your life who's going through something difficult to show them that God cares for them?**
  - **Would a nap, snack, and time to recover help you when you are feeling overwhelmed? What practical things could you ask God for the next time you feel swamped?**

## RESPONSE | Care Kits

- Care is something that is felt uniquely by different kinds of people. Amazingly, God customizes care for all of us and invites us to do the same. When we follow Jesus, we are invited to be part of how God meets and cares for people's needs. When we see overwhelmed people, we get to be part of how God cares for them.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this response, you will need some paper bags, index cards, and a few items that could help teenagers who are feeling overwhelmed in your context. Here are a few ideas to get your imagination going: gum, hand sanitizer, sports drinks, crackers, protein bars, and candy. Invite them to build a few Care Kits, write a note to put in the bag to remind the recipient that God cares for them, and look for an opportunity to give it to peers that week.*
- God takes care of us in many ways, including how we love and show kindness to each other. You get to be part of what God is doing in the world. Use your time handing out these kits to remind yourself that **when you feel overwhelmed, God takes care of you.**