



The Struggle Is Real

Part 3 – Monsters

Stephanie Bartsch – October 23, 2016

HANG OUT (warming up to the topic)

1. Check in to see how everyone's week was.
2. Take time to review this week's teaching and discuss your reactions. Talk about what most challenged, puzzled, and encouraged you.

HEAR (listening to God through Scripture)

3. Refresh your memory with the story of Sarai (Sarah) and Hagar in **Genesis 16**.
 - Both Sarai and Hagar individually feel as if the world is against them, and that life is utterly and completely miserable.
 - Have you ever felt totally cheated by life, and taken that frustration out on someone else?
 - Have you ever sacrificed a relationship just to prove that you were right? What was that experience like?
4. Read **Romans 12:17-21**.
 - People change through kindness, not revenge. Kindness can restore people. In what ways can we fight hatred and violence with kindness? Do you believe that is possible for us to do?
 - How did Jesus fight hatred and violence? (What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?)

HUDDLE (making it personal and praying together)

5. In Sarai and Hagar's darkest hour, God gave them hope. It's this hope that turns victims into overcomers, and it's this same hope that we hold in Jesus. Do you believe that God has grace, even for you in your darkest hour? What kind of hope does that give you?

6. Stephanie gave us some homework to do when thinking about our relationships in conflict:

• **Think about one person you are in conflict with right now:**

1. Can you stop seeing them as a monster?
2. Can you try to see it from their side?
3. Erase the list.
4. Own your part.
5. Focus less on how I'm being treated, and more on how I'm treating others.
6. Repay evil with good.

7. How do we solve conflict? Repay evil with good. This might not work, it might not solve all of our conflicts, but it's the only thing that might – so it's worth trying.

8. End by praying for one another.