



Have you ever wondered how a relationship that started out so good got so messy and difficult? In this series from the book of James, *Relationslips*, we'll identify five lies that will ruin relationships. We'll also discover God's truth, that when believed and applied to our lives, will set us free and bring peace and joy to our relationships.

1. Have you ever been in a difficult situation and played the if/only game? How'd that work out?
2. What's wrong with believing the lie: "If only I could change \_\_\_\_\_, then everything will be great?"
3. Read James 5:7-12. In this passage there are two essential instructions we must follow when life is hard to experience the harvest of peace and joy. First, **when circumstances are outside of our control, don't grumble, but be patient and focus on the return of the LORD.** How does the farmer teach us to wait patiently for the harvest that only God can bring? How will focusing on the LORD and his return help us in difficult trials?
4. The second is **when circumstances are difficult, be patient because the LORD is compassionate and merciful.** Think about a prophet from the Bible or the story of Job. What does this teach us about being patient in difficult trials?
5. In v.11 James says *you have seen the purpose of the LORD and how he is compassionate and merciful.* The Bible teaches that God's primary purpose in the life of his children is to conform us to the likeness of Jesus (see Romans 8:29). As a Father, God is more concerned with making us holy than happy. When has God used a trial to do this in your life? How did this reveal his compassion and mercy?
6. When we are in difficult trials the temptation is to get out of that situation. But James 5:12 commands us to stop making false promises but to let our yes be yes and our no be no so we don't fall under condemnation. Why is it essential as Christians that we keep our promises even when it's hard? What if God wants to use your hard trial to bring about a harvest of righteousness, will you be patient in that trial?
7. The greatest act of the LORD's compassion and mercy can be seen when God the Father sent Jesus to suffer and patiently endure being falsely accused, beaten and crucified for our impatience, grumbling and promise breaking. What hard trial are you facing today? Will you turn to Jesus both for his forgiveness and the strength you need to patiently endure so you can be part of the harvest?