

When we are learning anything new, it is uncomfortable at first. We have to FORCE ourselves quite a bit to persevere. But before long, you're going to sports training for fun! A meeting of a musical band becomes a joy after a demanding rehearsal. You enjoy the music...

I had a similar experience in that educational club. At first I had very strange feelings there. I have not always been successful in learning new things in contact with unbelievers. However, after a short I started to enjoy talking with those people! I found out that I like them! And I saw living Jesus there doing things I had never seen before!

Jesus tells his disciples many times about JOY. And he gives that joy some pretty strong adjectives. Check out the quotes at the bottom of this page („Parameters of Joy“). The Lord Jesus does not want our ministry to unbelievers to be a burden of duty. He wants our sharing about Him to become a RHYTHM OF JOY. Though he does not at all promise that it will be easy: *They went out of the council rejoicing that they were found worthy to be dishonored for that name.* (Acts 5:41) When Barnabas and Paul were driven out of the city in Acts 13, the following sentence follows: *And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 13:52) Are you surprised that a huge AWAKENING happened in these places?

Think with me, please, what would probably happen if contemporary Czech and Slovak believers shared Jesus as joyfully and massively as the disciples in the book of Acts! Have you seen your first convert whose life was subsequently transformed by living Jesus? It is an indescribable JOY. A huge engine to share with other non-believers.

If we want to see BIGGER fruit than before in the long term, it is very important that our occasional DECISIONS to say something to someone turn into a RHYTHM! So that our connection with unbelievers together with prayers for them become regular and purposeful! I assure you that the rhythm of going to the club and talking to people there has become a RHYTHM of great JOY for me!

DECISION – RHYTHM – FRUIT

A very important sequence emerged from this observation:

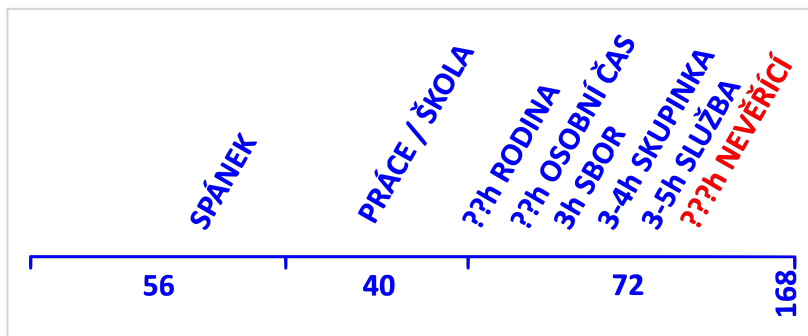
1. Lord Jesus my occasional DECISIONS

2. led to a RHYTHM of regular contact with unbelievers
3. and then blessed that rhythm with wonderful FRUIT!

„Where do I find time for that?“ some believers comment this idea. I don't know what period of life you are in right now, but discuss it with the Lord Jesus, and calculate the following balance sheet for yourself.

The time capacity of one week is: $7 \times 24 = 168$ hours:

- a. We spend roughly a third of our lives sleeping: $7 \times 8 = 56$ hours a week.
- b. For easier calculation, let's say that work or school + assignments take us $5 \times 8 = 40$ hours a week. (Some much more!)



- c. The remaining roughly 70 hours per week are likely to be filled with items such as:
 - family
 - personal time
 - social media or television
 - and a lot of other things...
- d. And how much time do you devote to church activities and preparation for them?
 - I estimate that everything around the Sunday service will take at least THREE hours a week (including traveling and informal conversations afterwards).
 - How much of your time does the group - or the youth - consume? THREE - FOUR hours a week?
 - Are you involved in worship, elders' board or other ministry? Are THREE hours a week enough for you? Or rather FIVE, if you take the preparations into account as well?

- e. **And what about our ministry to unbelievers who are PERISHING?** When was the last time we reached out to someone? And when are we going to do it next?

If we want to see FRUIT, it is inevitably preceded by a series of one-time DECISIONS. However, RHYTHM is very important for long-term increasing FRUITS! The rhythm of our prayers along with the rhythm of specific ministry to specific unbelieving people.

DECISION - RHYTHM - FRUIT

I mentioned to you the idea that if I can't add anything into my calendar, first, I have to REMOVE something from it! I highly recommend that you take a snapshot of your normal week and consider the next steps before the Lord accordingly! If something significant is to change in the effectiveness of our spiritual ministry to non-believers, if for the whole of our lives we want to bear FRUIT that will cross the threshold of death with us, we need to DECIDE for a regular RHYTHM. And the Lord Jesus assures us that in His closeness - with His empowerment - it will be a rhythm of GREAT JOY that will bear ETERNAL FRUIT!

Lord Jesus, Thank You that You are ready to give us abundant fruit when we decide with many prayers to sow regularly and abundantly...

Parameters of Joy

John the Baptist was very happy:

- *The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now COMPLETE.*

John 3:29

The Lord Jesus gives joy to his disciples:

- *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:12*
- *I have told you this so that MY joy may be in you and that your joy may be COMPLETE.*



John 15:11

- *So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away YOUR joy. John 16:22*
- *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be COMPLETE. John 16:24*

The Lord Jesus urgently prays for the joy of his disciples:

- *...they may have the FULL MEASURE of my joy within them. John 17:13*

The joy continued even after Pentecost, though the external conditions were much worse:

- *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Acts 5:41*
- *So there was GREAT joy in that city. Acts 8:8*
- *And the disciples were FILLED with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:52*

The same power of joy breathes upon us from the apostolic letters:

- *May the God of hope fill you with ALL joy and peace. Romans 15:13*
- *We WORK WITH YOU for your joy. 2 Corinthians 1:24*
- *For you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy SPIRIT. 1 Thessalonians 1:6*
- *You believe in him and are filled with an INEXPRESSIBLE and glorious joy. 1 Peter 1:8*
- *We write this so that our joy is COMPLETE. 2 John 1:4*

Try to find other passages. □