

*We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.*

## **My Key Principles for Friendship Counseling/Discipleship**

**Fred Nelson, *Professional Friend***

*(These principles have kept me focused, sane, and loving my work)*

1. The purpose of the Gospel of Christ is friendship. (*Friend* - "one attached to another by affection or esteem"; "the enemy of my enemy.")
2. *Friendship* is more important than *things*; but *integrity* is more important than *friendship*. I am commanded by God to speak the "truth in love."
3. I befriend the people that God puts in my path because they have been created by God, and they are precious to Him. If by loving them and sharing with them the Gospel, they enter His Kingdom, that is a bonus.
4. I always let my disciples pick themselves. I pray for God to send me FAT people (faithful, available, and teachable). I try to raise the spiritual bar frequently.
5. My plan from Mark 2 is to help people: *get save* (conversion); *get well* (discipleship); *get going* (leadership). I am diligent to make sure that those who "think" they are saved know the Biblical requirements (Rom 10:9) and especially the correct NT definitions of *Lord* = one in total authority and *believe* - trust in, rely on, cling to, surrender to. (Two useful questions - "Is Jesus the *boss* of your life?" and "What evidence do you have in your life that Jesus is the boss?")
6. I attempt to guide people not by my experience or even by common sense but by the written Word of God, the Bible. At the very most I am a compassionate "page turner."
7. My job is to love my neighbor not to fix him. I try to listen more than I talk.
8. If time allows me to both *pray* for and *follow-up* with my friend - wonderful! If I have only enough time to do one or the other - I *pray* for my friend!
9. I can only lead someone as far as God has taken me. I must spend time with my Father.
10. My most useful and enlightening question has proven to be "On what do you base your decisions?" Nearly everyone eventually answers, "on my feelings?"
11. I don't take the credit when people seem to do better, and I won't take the blame when they don't.
12. Every piece of advice I give has the following two principles at its core:
  1. "Life is not about us but about God."
  2. "Obeying God is the only thing in life that matters, and obeying God is always in our best interest."

