

Who is Derek Prince?

David Prince is a member of the shepherding movement. He promoted “delegated” or “spiritual” authority over others and claimed to be a “personal shepherd”.

His original group included: Don Basham, Bob Mumford and Charles Simpson. They claimed to be an offshoot of the Jesus Movement from Southern California.

The shepherding movement taught that every person must be submitted to another person—a shepherd, pastor and disciple and that all major life decisions should be submitted to them.

The bible teaches that Jesus is the: Good Master (Mk 10:17), Great High Priest (Heb 4:14) and Lord (Jn 21:7). His council is: immutable (Heb 6:17), faithful (Is 25:1), wonderful (Is 28:29), great (Jer 32:19), sovereign (Da 4:35) and eternal (Eph 3:11).¹ Jesus is the Good Shepherd (Heb 13:20) who said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (Jn 10:27).

The shepherding movement began as an accountability group. Members would ask others, “Who is your covering?” Prince claimed that individuals had to have a “church covering” which he and his associates could provide it.

Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together in the Garden of Eden (the first act of religion recorded in scripture [Ge 3:7]); but, God provided an animal skin (a blood covering) for Adam and Eve (Ge 3:21). Christians are clothed in Christ’s righteousness (Is 61:10). They overcome by his provision (Re 12:11).

Like a personal fitness trainer shepherds are said to provide sound spiritual direction for individuals.

Christians are to be guided by the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:14) not men (Ga 1:10). The apostle Paul was glad that he had not baptized many lest men think that they should look to him rather than to Jesus (1 Co 14-15).

“Delegated authorities” in the shepherding movement are said to speak with God’s authority.

Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, “...By what authority are you doing these things? ...[W]ho is he who gave you this authority?” Lk 20:2, NKJV. The Pharisees did not want to discuss heaven’s authority or their own lack of belief in the Word of God incarnate before them (Lk 20:5-8).

Prince stated, “[W]henever [God's] delegated authority touches our lives, he requires us to acknowledge and submit to it, just as we would to him in person.”

Another shepherding teacher, John Robert Stevens, stated, “If the authority over you is submissive to God, then you are to be submissive to him with your very life.”

Prince and those from his movement sought power and control in the lives of others—a trait prohibited for shepherds of the flock (1 Pe 5:1–4).

¹ Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson’s quick reference topical Bible index (p. 156). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Biblical submission is to: one another in marriage (Eph 5:21-22), rulers (1 Pe 2:13), elders (1 Pe 5:5) and true leaders (Heb 13:17) and God (Jas 4:7).²

Decisions about: personal finances, employment, whom to marry or other family matters should be prayerfully made. *Godly* council in the bible is advised. Jude predicted divine judgment on apostasy (Jud 1:7b, 14–15) reminding his readers about Enoch’s prophecy concerning Christ’s second coming:

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are *ungodly* among them of all their *ungodly* deeds which they have committed in an *ungodly* way, and of all the harsh things which *ungodly* sinners have spoken against Him.” Jud 14–15 NKJV, emphasis mine

Paul previewed the future warning others to watch out for false teachers in the church (Ac 20:29–30). They would be ungodly, vicious wolves not sparing the flock (v. 29).

Regarding Acts chapter 20 verses 29 and 30 John MacArthur wrote:

20:29 savage wolves. Borrowed from Jesus (Matt. 7:15; 10:16), this metaphor stresses the extreme danger false teachers pose to the church.

20:30 from among yourselves. Even more deadly than attacks from outside the church are the defections of those (especially leaders) within the church (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17; cf. Jude 3, 4, 10–13). *perverse things.* The Gr. word means “distorted,” or “twisted.” False teachers twist God’s Word for their own evil ends (13:10; 2 Pet. 3:16).

Regarding shepherd movement Ronald Enroth wrote:

Bible scholars point out that the New Testament concept of authority as expressed in the Greek word *exousia* does not have the connotation of jurisdiction over the lives of others. Rather, it is the authority of truth, the authority of wisdom and experience which can be evidenced in a leader who is held up as a special example who can commend himself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (II Cor. 4:2)

Two of the classic hallmarks of authoritarianism are blind loyalty and unquestioning obedience. Kennedy and Lewis remind us that "blind trust in any human authority, be it in a pastor, or in a group of elders, or even in an apostolic authority of the status of Paul is never called for in Scripture. The loyalty we are called to is first and foremost the loyalty to the received Word of God. The loyalty we have to one another as Christians is not blind loyalty... nor is it an unthinking loyalty."

...The good shepherd leads but does not control.

The second dangerous doctrine had to do with “Covenant” relationships or “Spiritual Family.” If being absolutely submitted to another person was an imprisonment, then the covenant relationship was the iron padlock on the door. The idea here is that when you enter into these discipleship relationships, they are permanent, and more broadly that your association with a

² Ibid p. 596.

specific group of believers is permanent. You were in a “Covenant” and if you left the relationship or the fellowship group, you were breaking a covenant.

In his personal life Prince did not follow his own advice. When he wanted to marry Ruth Baker, an already married woman with three children 15 years his junior,³ his own shepherd group forbade it. He became a serial adulterer with her anyway.⁴ His life did not measure up of to the qualifications required for an elder—and all Christians—as outlined for Timothy by Paul in Titus chapter 1 verses 5–14.

Derek Prince died in 2003; but his false teachings go on. His radio program called *Derek Prince Legacy Radio* is still aired today.

³ Baker divorced her husband (Ro 7:2-3).

⁴ The Wartburg Watch 2016: Dissecting Christian Trends The Legacy of Derek Prince
<http://thewartburgwatch.com/2011/01/28/the-legacy-of-derek-prince/>