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They say boys will be boys and men will be men; the man is the head of the house and that's that!

Funny enough ten or twenty years ago this was the case. Men could do what they wanted in a relationship; they got the most food at mealtimes; had the nicest seat; gave the most instructions; and even when it came to sex or how many children to bear it was the man's right to decide. In short, men got the best of everything. This even happened in my first relationship. Growing up in Northern Namibia, I was raised with the notion that men are superior. So, I could do whatever I wanted and my girlfriend simply had to comply, meaning, I had the power.

In the olden days culture dominated the gender roles and so women simply did what they were told. Girls were brought up to obey men, and women and girls were not expected to say much except for eewa tate. But then came the 21st century, with all its education, women empowerment, human rights and gender equality. It is no secret that the issue of gender based violence has increased as a result of power struggles between men and women.

For many years the power struggle between men and women has been fiercely fought, with men consistently winning the battle according to history. But perhaps the most interesting one has been the use of the Bible to try and justify men's need for control in a relationship. For many centuries men have consistently used the Bible as a basis to dominate, gain power and control over the opposite sex. Ephesians 5:23 is often used to justify the claim that the husband is superior to the wife. It reads as follows: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the Head of the Church and He is the savior of the body." This has become a weapon of choice in the power struggle. The rationale is that if the Bible said it, why should men not use it?

I often wonder, however, whether we men actually understand what it means to be the head? The functions of the head? Or do we simply apply this verse from the Bible out of context to justify our need for power and control in a relationship? The core function of the head is to protect the brain, which is one of the most important human organs.

If the job of the head is to protect the brain then it means the man should protect as well. The man is there to protect his wife, not beat, not manipulate, not hit, not abuse, but to protect her and his family. The head is supposed to think how to best make things work. In marriage there is a union of two heads; evidently one needs to take the lead in

one area and the other can take the lead in another area, but the idea of one head making all the decisions won't work. Two heads working together will always achieve more.

I am not disputing the Bible, merely the interpretation of it out of context. It is wise to realize being the head does not mean dominating, but it means to think, using our heads to protect, build and empower our women for a better society. As men we need to understand how to interpret the Scriptures: to be the head that thinks like Christ did, the one that forgives, understands, values, sacrifices, not the head that abuses, misuses or corrupts.

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