

all for good
the story of Joseph in Genesis



Genesis 39

Introduction

- When Joseph had risen to power in Potiphar's house, the wife of Potiphar noticed that Joseph was handsome and tried to entice him to lie with her.
- Joseph refused, out of respect for Potiphar and for God.
- She continued to pursue him day after day. One day, she grabbed him and he ran from her, leaving his garment in her hand.
- She told the servants of the household that Joseph had tried to seduce her. Potiphar threw Joseph into prison.

Genesis 39:6b-12

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- Potiphar's wife is painted as very brazen in this story.
- She doesn't just ask Joseph to lie with her, she demands it (verse 7).
- The NIV puts an exclamation point at the end of the sentence and the NLT says, "She demanded...."
- Adultery was considered a grave sin in the whole ancient Near East, not just among God's people.
- In Egypt, adultery with a married woman was both a moral wrong and an actual crime.

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- In Egypt, a married woman convicted of adultery was punished by slitting the nose, because the nose was the most conspicuous part of the face and would make her the most unattractive.
- The man who slept with her was punished by a thousand blows of the lash.
- Potiphar's wife's actions were especially risky because of who her husband was: the captain of the bodyguard of Pharaoh, "chief of the slaughterers" (chief executioner) and overseer of the prison.

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- Even though Joseph rejected her, the woman continued to pursue him and Joseph continued to say no (verse 10).
- The Bible doesn't tell us what other things Joseph did besides "just say no," but it is safe to assume that he tried to avoid being alone with her, possibly even avoided being around her at all.
- As persistent as Potiphar's wife was, Joseph was persistent in saying no.
- Avoiding sin takes perseverance, commitment and strength.

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- The Scriptures tell us specifically to “flee from sexual immorality” because sexual sin is not only sinning against another person and God, it is also sinning against your own body (1 Corinthians 6:18).
- Joseph showed this kind of attitude toward sin. He abstained and abstained and abstained, and then, when she cornered him, he just flat-out ran away, even though it meant leaving his garment in her hand (verse 12).
- Whether he thought about how that would look or not is unclear, but Joseph just knew he had to get out of there. Joseph may have lost his garment, but he kept his integrity.

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- Joseph's wise handling of the situation directly contrasts with the foolish actions of the simple man in Proverbs.
- Solomon sees a fool walking toward the house of an adulterous woman (Proverbs 7:6–9).
- Instead of running away like Joseph, the foolish man stays and listens to her and she leads him astray with her “smooth talk” (Proverbs 7:21).
- Potiphar's wife tried to talk Joseph into it every day, but he refused to listen to her (verse 10). By this, Joseph proves to be truly wise.

Joseph and Potiphar's wife

- Our sin not only hurts other people; it is an offense against God
- The first time Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he politely said no and gave her two very legitimate reasons:
 - because Potiphar trusted him and he didn't want to break that trust (verses 8–9a)
 - because lying with her would be a sin against God (verse 9b)

Joseph and Potiphar

- Reason #1: Loyalty to Potiphar
- Joseph showed great integrity in his loyalty to his master.
- Remember, even though he had been given a lot of authority, Joseph was still a slave.
- He could have been bitter toward his master; he could have seen this as a way to hurt Potiphar.

Joseph and Potiphar

- Instead Joseph showed respect and honor to his master, as the apostle Paul commands slaves to do in the New Testament (Ephesians 6:5).
- Paul tells slaves to obey their masters not only to win their favor, but because it would please God. He said they were to work with integrity and excellence as if they were working for the Lord (Ephesians 6:6).
- Paul advises them to free themselves if they can (1 Corinthians 7:21–22).
- But he is telling believers to be honorable in whatever position they find themselves.

Joseph and God

- Reason #2: Loyalty to God
- Joseph knew that adultery wasn't just a bad thing according to Egyptian law, it was a sin against God.
- Joseph wasn't saying no to Potiphar's wife just because it was illegal, or out of fear of punishment, or even because he believed it to be immoral.
- Joseph didn't want to disobey God.

Joseph and God

- The Bible describes sin as not just harm against another person, but against God.
- When David was confronted with his own sin of adultery, he said to God, “Against You and You only have I sinned” (Psalm 51:4).
- Not that his sin didn’t also hurt Uriah and Bathsheba, but that, even more importantly, it damaged his relationship with God.
- This is why Nathan asked David, “Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?” (2 Samuel 12:9).

Genesis 39:13-20

Potiphar's Reaction

- Even if we are faithful to God and others, we may be falsely accused of evil.
- What is important is that we maintain our integrity before God.
- Potiphar's wife not only tried to seduce Joseph. When he said no, she turned on him and accused him of trying to “laugh at me” (verse 17).
- It literally means “to make a mockery of” or make a fool of or to bring shame.
- In verse 14, she says he came “to laugh at us,” meaning to bring shame to the whole household.

Potiphar's Reaction

- By using the euphemism first, she was emphasizing the effect this situation had on Potiphar, trying to push him to get really upset about it, because of the shame brought to him and his entire household.
- She even tries to put some of the blame on Potiphar himself: the slave you brought here (verse 17).
- She also emphasizes that Joseph is a foreigner: that Hebrew slave (verse 17), exploiting a long-standing racial tension between Egyptians and foreigners from Canaan. She is trying to make Potiphar angry.

Potiphar's Reaction

- As a slave, Joseph would have had no legal rights, so even if he had tried to defend himself to Potiphar, it wouldn't have mattered. He would not have been given a trial.
- But it is interesting to note that Potiphar didn't want to see Joseph's talents go to waste. He wanted to punish him and keep him away from his wife, but he expected that Joseph may serve some useful purpose in the prison, which he later would.
- Potiphar was in charge of the prison, so he could keep Joseph close by, but keep him out of his household and away from his wife.

Potiphar's Reaction

- The word for prison here is “house” and the Scripture says the prison is in “the house of the captain of the guard” (Genesis 40:3), whom we know is Potiphar (39:1).
- Later, the text says that Joseph asked the officers of Pharaoh who were “with him in custody in his master’s house” (40:7).
- All of which makes it seem like the prison was some part of Potiphar’s house, though not the main part of the household where he would be around his wife.

Potiphar's Reaction

- That doesn't mean it was luxurious accommodations. It was referred to as "confinement" and "custody" (40:3).
- Also, Joseph called it "the pit" (40:15). That is the same word used of the cistern into which his brothers threw him (Gen. 37). This was not a place he wanted to be.
- Our point last week was that if we are faithful to God, He will bless us.
- But in this story, Joseph is faithful to God and he gets falsely accused and thrown into prison (v. 20). Where is the blessing in that?

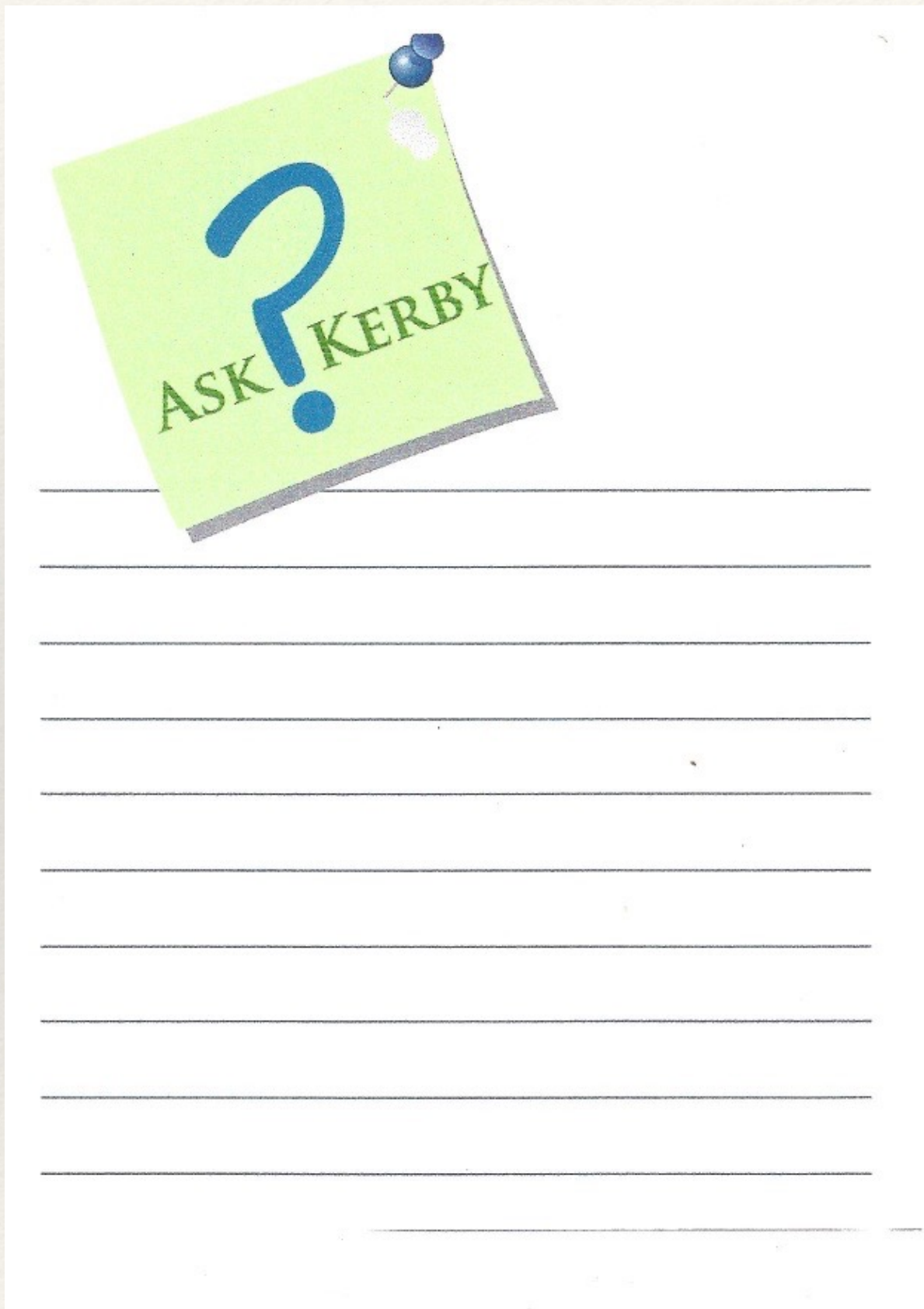
Potiphar's Reaction

- To an outsider, it would have looked as if God were no longer blessing Joseph. But the story is quick to tell us: “the Lord was with Joseph.”
- This section is a reminder that sometimes being faithful to God doesn't get you the head position and the money and the power.
- It gets you falsely accused and thrown into prison.
- Sometimes blessing isn't material blessing, it's learning to lean on God in the midst of trial and suffering.

Potiphar's Reaction

- This is the lesson of Joseph's story: that no matter what Joseph is going through, God is with him and working it all out for good. Even if it doesn't look like "blessing" to us, God is using it for good.
- Joseph continued to do what was right and God blessed him and blessed others through him.
- Can we do the same? No matter what is going on around us, can we focus on doing what is right, even in the midst of evil all around us? Even when we've been mistreated, misrepresented or misunderstood?

Ask Kerby



What is the history of reformation leader Girolamo Savonarola ?

Savonarola

- Girolamo Savonarola was an Italian Dominican friar and preacher active in Renaissance Florence.
- He is best known for his destruction of secular art and culture and his calls for Christian renewal.
- He denounced clerical corruption, despotic rule, and the exploitation of the poor.



Why Donald Trump is a second Savonarola

If the populist preacher's fate is anything to go by, Trump's presidency is doomed

🕒 Mon, Nov 6, 2017, 11:25

Ian Goldin and Chris Kutarna



Donald Trump has emulated Savonarola's success but he is also repeating his worst mistakes.



Donald Trump, false prophet. By contemporary standards, his populist power-taking may seem like genius, but through a historical lens he is an obvious plagiarist. Trump has stolen his lines and stage directions from a playbook that is literally as old as print – and from which we can already read his ending.

Savonarola

- Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in 1494 and threatened Florence.
- Savonarola intervened with the French king, the Florentines expelled the ruling Medici and established a “popular” republic.
- He then declared that Florence would be the New Jerusalem, the world center of Christianity.
- He also instituted a puritanical campaign, enlisting the active help of Florentine youth.
- He is even mentioned in Machiavelli’s book, *The Prince*.

Savonarola

- Today tourists travel to Florence, Italy to view the glorious art of the Renaissance.
- But Savonarola believed that the beauty created by these artists was overshadowed by the decadence, corruption, and moral rot.
- Boys who had once roamed the streets were organized into a sacred military, marching through the city singing hymns and taking collections for the poor.



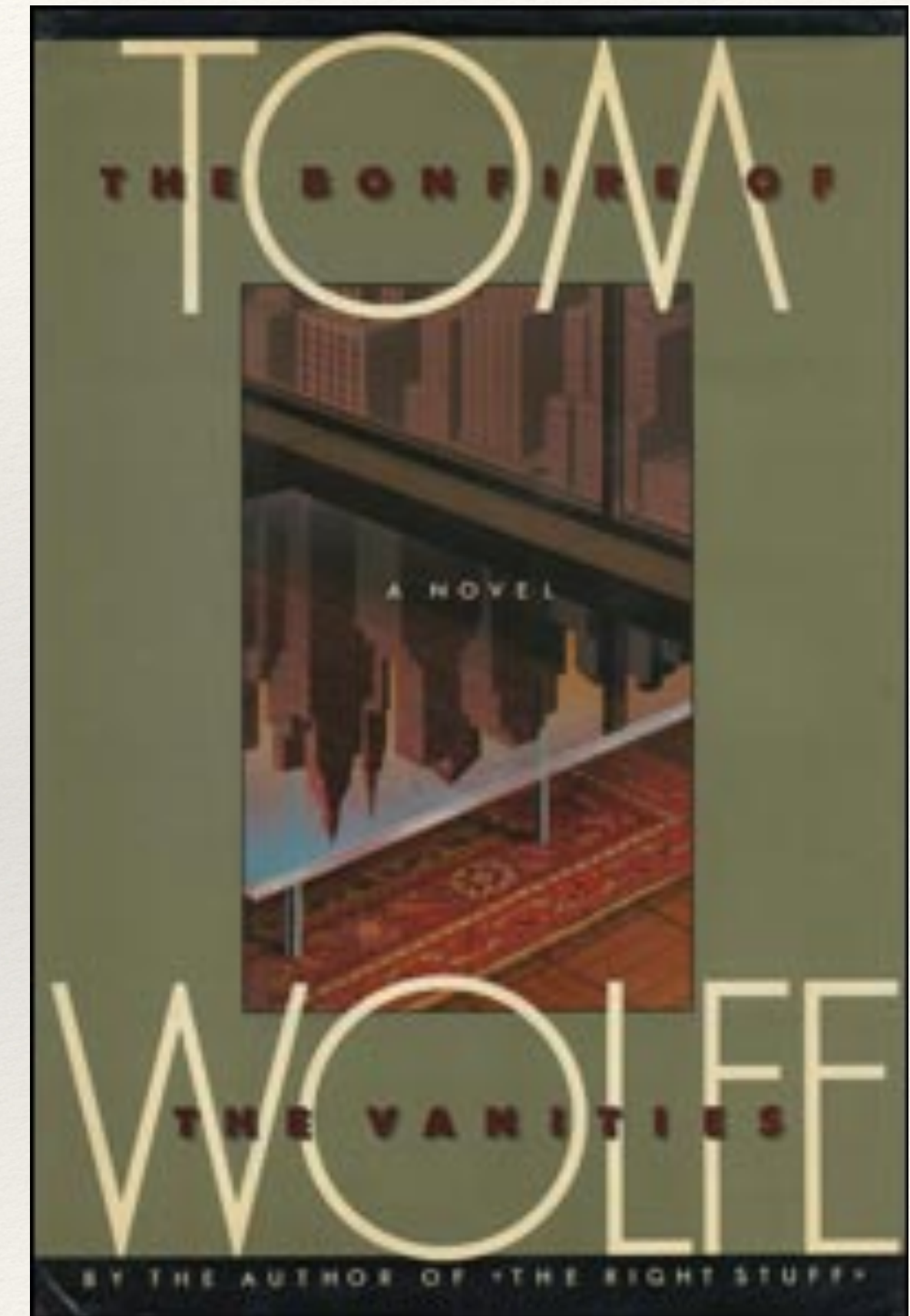
Bonfire of the Vanities

- During the carnival season, they went from house to house and collected trinkets, cosmetics, luxury items, and obscene books to be burned on the last day of the carnival.
- A huge “bonfire of vanities” was created in the public square (sixty feet high with a forty foot circumference at its base).



Bonfire of the Vanities

- This is also the title of the satirical novel written by Tom Wolfe.
- It is the tragic story of a bond trader on Wall Street and illustrates the ambition, social class, politics, and greed in New York City during the 1980s.
- The title refers to which happened in 1497 in Florence, Italy under Savonarola.



Savonarola

- Pope Alexander VI wanted to silence Savonarola's denunciations of the corruption and immorality in the church and offered to make him a cardinal.
- Savonarola refused the offer.
- The Pope finally condemned Giroloma Savonarola for announcing he was a special messenger from God and excommunicated him
- Giroloma Savonarola was hanged and then burned at a stake on 1498.
- As the bishop stripped him of his priestly garb, he said, "I separate thee from the church militant and from the church triumphant."



Savonarola

- Savonarola differed from Wycliffe, Hus, and Luther in that he never quarreled with the theology of the Roman Catholic Church.
- He was more of a moral reformer than a theologian.
- Yet he grasped the biblical understanding of justification by faith that would be more fully developed by later Reformers.

