



INTEGRITY

Tom and its Hebrew word group should be translated 'blameless,' 'blamelessness,' and 'be blameless' when they refer to a person's integrity (Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13) and 'perfect' when they refer to God (Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:31; Psa. 19:7). To be blameless is to be above reproach: no one can blame you for doing wrong. This word group does not teach sinless perfection, however, since all men have sin natures (Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10). Noah, for instance, was "perfect" (Gen. 6:9 KJV), yet sinned (9:21). God twice called Job "perfect" (Job 1:8; 2:3 KJV), yet Job mentions "the iniquities of my youth" (13:26). The Bible makes a distinction between absolute and relative perfection.

1. God's way (Psa. 18:30), work (Deut. 32:4), and Law (Psa. 19:7) are blameless—absolutely perfect.
2. Satan was perfect before his fall (Ezek. 28:15). Angels were created morally perfect and everything they did was blameless and pleasing to God.
3. Integrity exists in the heart (Gen. 20:5–6; 1 Kings 9:4; Psa. 7:8; 78:72; 101:2).
4. To walk with integrity is to be obedient (1 Kings 9:4–5) and to live a blameless life (Psa. 26:1, 11). We can be blameless by not sinning (Psa. 18:23). It's possible for fallen people (Gen. 17:1) and nations (Deut. 18:13) to be blameless before God.
5. The wicked hate men and women who have integrity (Prov. 29:10). To be hated by 'men of bloodshed' is to be in danger: given provocation and opportunity they may try to kill you.
6. The LORD is delighted with those who walk blamelessly—with integrity (Prov. 11:20).
7. The blameless are protected by their righteousness (Prov. 13:6). The protection envisioned here is to be *kept from danger*. Our righteousness is like a guard who watches for and alerts us to danger—and in the process protects us from harm.
8. The blameless will walk in safety (Prov. 10:9). This is a promise of protection and security—to be *kept from danger* because their righteousness (Prov. 13:6) and wisdom (3:23) protects them. In addition, God has promised to protect those who are obedient to the covenant (Lev. 25:18–19; 26:5; cf. Psa. 4:8). The implication of the second line is: 'But he who is crooked in his ways will be found out *and will not walk with security*.' He does not feel safe, but is always looking over his shoulder.
9. The LORD protects those who walk blamelessly—with integrity (Prov. 2:7). The protection envisioned here is protection *in danger*. Shields were defensive weapons carried for protection in battle. Picture God as a warrior with uplifted shield standing between you and your enemies—shielding you from harm. God's protection is conditioned on (1) being upright in heart (Psa. 7:10), (2) walking blamelessly (Psa. 84:11; Prov. 2:7), and (3) taking refuge in him (Psa. 18:30; Prov. 30:5). We have no reason to fear if God is our shield (Gen. 15:1). God's protection is a reason for happiness and thanksgiving (Psa. 28:7).
10. Protection is promised to those who walk blamelessly—with integrity (Prov. 28:18; cf. Psa. 25:21). The verb *yasha* is used of deliverance from enemies (Psa. 18:3) and deliverance in battle (33:16). David counted on his blamelessness and uprightness to preserve him in danger (Psa. 25:21). God will protect you for your allotted number of days (cf. Job 14:5; Psa. 139:16). Jesus, for example, lived a blameless life and God protected him from his enemies on numerous occasions (Luke 4:28–30; John 8:59; 10:39), but removed his hedge of protection at the cross. Divine protection is promised for your allotted number of days, but does not promise a long life.
11. The way of the LORD (doing righteousness and justice) is a stronghold to the blameless (Prov. 10:29). The way of the LORD is the way of righteousness and justice: we "keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen. 18:19). Apollos was "instructed in the way of the Lord"—from the Old Testament (Acts 18:25). The protection envisioned here is again protection *in the midst of danger*. A stronghold is a place of protection and safety in times of danger. Notice that righteousness protects the blameless from danger (Prov. 13:6) and in danger (10:29).
12. It's better to be poor with integrity than rich and crooked (Prov. 28:6; cf. 19:1).
13. Be careful to choose friends and associates who are blameless—as King David did (Psa. 101:6). This is "a pledge to surround himself in his reign with the faithful and blameless" (*NIV Study Bible*, 892).
14. Happiness is promised to men and women who are blameless (Psa. 119:1). They will remain in the land (Prov. 2:21), not hurt themselves (Prov. 11:5), and inherit good (Prov. 28:10).
15. Happiness is promised to children of fathers who walk blamelessly (Prov. 20:7; cf. 1 Kings 11:9–13). This is one of 45 beatitudes in the Old Testament: it promises happiness to children if their fathers walk blamelessly before the LORD. They will be happy because God protects them (Prov. 14:26) and their inheritance will not be squandered, lost, or seized to pay debts (13:22).