



The **BOOK OF PROVERBS** is prescribed to be read during the forty days of Great Lent, and indeed we hear passages from this work of wisdom during the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts. The following text is representative of the teaching encountered in this book, and can certainly serve as a 'check list' of sorts as we make our way through Great Lent:

There are six things which the Lord hates, seven of which are an abomination to him:

- haughty eyes,
- a lying tongue,
- and hands that shed innocent blood,
- a heart that devises wicked plans,
- feet that make haste to run to evil,
- a false witness who breathes out lies,
- and a man who sows discord among brothers.

#### **PROVERBS 6:16-19**

With the exception of "hands that shed innocent blood," the other forms of unrighteous behavior here may enter our lives both consciously, as when we plan or plot our evil; or unconsciously, as when such actions become habitual or "second nature" due to constant repetition - and at this point they do not even seem that sinful, though we will dutifully enumerate them in confession.

But notice that the Lord is not "suggesting" that we refrain from such actions; or that such behavior is "rude" or "impolite." No, to God Himself these actions are an "abomination," the Lord "hates" these things! The Lord is not a celestial version of a pop psychologist, but rather the holy One of Israel. He does not abide in the murky realm of "situation ethics" but in the light of moral choices that spring forth from the heart.

When our bodies accumulate a list of illnesses or ailments, the whole organism begins to suffer and seemingly to "break down." The same principle applies to our souls. Of the list of seven abominations above, how many can we "take on" before our souls begin to suffer something of a spiritual meltdown?

Let us run to our Lord Jesus Christ, falling down before Him and confessing our sins with true compunction of heart, that we may receive from His inexhaustible love. He awaits our conversion. He forgives us "seventy times seven." Since He is "gentle and lowly of heart" we will "find rest for our souls" (MAT. 11:29), for He is the "Physician of our souls and bodies."

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

#### **PROVERBS 3:5-8**