

## The Challenge

Alas, it is very difficult to live out our lives and remain on that track. It is a tremendous challenge to live in the spiritual dimension while staying fully engaged with important daily responsibilities. There are many stumbling blocks along the way. Our society is certainly at odds with it. Our own desires and personal aspirations clearly take us off course. Even the church does not typically address the issue adequately. Underlying everything is our own sinful human nature, which insists that we remain in control of our lives, rather than relinquishing that control to God.



The issue of control is a big one on this journey. We like to control our own lives and everything around us. Giving up control does not come easily for us. We resist any effort that insists or even suggests that we give control of our lives to God. It becomes a huge power struggle which, until we lose that struggle, God cannot enter our lives according to the Holy One's wishes and will.

The classic case in Scripture is the story of Saul of Tarsus, who only after losing this very struggle with God became a most outstanding messenger for God. He had a name change from Saul to Paul. We know him as St. Paul. Paul, thereafter, went wherever God's Spirit directed him to proclaim Christ's glory and victory. He became the author of many letters in our New Testament. Yet, it did not occur without a tremendous and desperate struggle of the wills over who was going to control Saul's life. Control was the issue for Paul. It is the same issue for us.

Be aware of that as you proceed on this spiritual journey. Your will is certainly going to be challenged. The question you must answer is this: "Do you ultimately

trust God with your life, even more than you trust yourself?" Those people who have made great strides on the spiritual journey are the ones who somehow have become aware that when the chips are down and the odds are against them, God clearly demonstrates that Divine will is far better than any human will. All of this is easier to say or write than to act out. Our wills are tough. We use them to survive. But there is something far greater than mere survival. It is that direct connection, closeness and communication with God, that offer not just life but an abundant and joyful life.

