

## **Exchange 15 February 2014 Discussion Questions: “Do We Have a Choice?”**

### **Do We Have Choice... in Life?**

What's a time that you felt your freedom was restricted. Was it justified, or did it make you angry (or both)?

How do we see freedom expressed in our society? How about in other societies around the world? What ‘freedoms’ are regulated or restricted, here or abroad?

How much free choice do you think we have? How much free choice do you think we should have? Is there a fine line between true free will and anarchy?

Does an increase in choice necessarily lead to an increase in happiness? Can we be overwhelmed by choice?

Can some restrictions on our actions actually be freeing? (E.g. Taking a vacation where there's no mobile reception; Setting aside a holy day like Sabbath; etc.) If so, why couldn't we make the same choices without those restrictions (like choosing to not check our phone; Taking time for spiritual reflection; etc)?

Are there less tangible restrictions to our freedom? Do our life experiences, personalities and beliefs about the world limit the choices we can actually, realistically make?

- If so, what does this mean for our concept of free choice?
- If we can better understand our personal limitations, does that give us greater chance for self-direction?

### **Do We Have a Choice... With God?**

When God's chooses certain people in the bible, like the Israelites, does that interfere with their free choice? What about the free choice of those he didn't choose, like the other nations in Canaan?

How does God's omniscience fit into our understanding of free will? If He knows all, how much freedom do we really have?

Do you think God ever violates our free will?

How does our concept of free will fit in with the following:

- The Bible story where God hardened the heart of Pharaoh;
- The Bible story where Jonah ran in the opposite direction of Ninevah. Did God respect Jonah's free will rejection or did he ultimately end up where God wanted him?

Do you think we phrase our prayers in a way that invites God to violate our, or another person's, free will? How does this fit in with our concept of free will and self determination?

If we are born with a sinful nature, then is it possible to be saved unless God changes our will?

How important is personal choice to God's plan of salvation?