

Reading *The Bible* for Guidance, Comfort, and Strength During Stressful Life Events

Jill B. Hamilton ▼ Angelo D. Moore ▼ Khishaana A. Johnson ▼ Harold G. Koenig

- ▶ **Background:** The use of religious practices to promote mental health among African Americans is well documented. African Americans are more likely to report strong religious affiliations and to use religion over prescribed medications for mental health problems. However, few studies have explored how African Americans use religious practices in response to stressful life events.
- ▶ **Objective:** The aim of this study is to examine how African American women and men find comfort in using scripture passages from *The Bible*.
- ▶ **Methods:** Fifty-four African American adults residing in the Southeastern United States participated in a qualitative descriptive study using open-ended semistructured interviews. Participants were asked to describe their use of scripture passages from *The Bible* and the personal meanings associated with these scriptures in the context of a family death or life-threatening illness.
- ▶ **Results:** These participants used scripture passages categorized as *God as Protector*, *God as Beneficent*, *Praise and Thanksgiving*, *God as Healer*, *Memory of Forefathers*, *Prayers to God*, and *Life after Death*. Few gender differences were noted. However, women were more likely to use scripture passages of *God as Protector* and *Life after Death*, whereas men were more likely to use *God as Beneficent* and *God as Healer*.
- ▶ **Discussion:** The religious practice of reading scripture passages from *The Bible* is a mental health-promoting strategy used during stressful life events. The findings of this study have practical uses for nurses and can be used to inform acceptable and sensitive approaches in addressing mental health issues and spiritual care needs in African American patients.
- ▶ **Key Words:** mental health • religion • spirituality • stress and coping

The use of religious practices to help manage stressful life events and avoid depression among African Americans is well documented. Mental health researchers have found that African Americans are more likely to use religion, a culturally relevant strategy, over medication for treating mental illness (Conner et al., 2010; Ward & Heidrich, 2009). Furthermore, the use of religious practices among African Americans is associated with fewer lifetime mood disorders (Chatters et al.,

2008). Although religious practices consist of a variety of behaviors, religious service attendance and praying have been studied most frequently (Blumenthal et al., 2007; Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004). As a result, much less is known about the use of *The Bible* and scripture passages for guidance and comfort to manage the stress that may lead to negative moods associated with major life events (Taylor et al., 2004). Parables and stories of survivors from *The Bible* are an important aspect of African American religious culture. However, an important gap to be addressed in the healthcare literature is how Christian African Americans use scripture passages from *The Bible* as a mental-health-promoting strategy during stressful life events.

Historically, Christian African Americans have read or memorized scripture passages from *The Bible* that gave meaning to their human existence (Raboteau, 2001). The scriptures used frequently among African slaves have provided insight into their belief systems as well as their connectedness to God and to other individuals who were suffering and powerless (Cone, 2002; Pinn, 1999; Raboteau, 1978). For Christian African Americans, the scriptures provided stories that allowed transcendence from a current situation of suffering to some other place or time. These stories helped them view the relief of pain and sorrow of other faithful servants as evidence of God's ability to protect, strengthen, and heal (Cone, 2002; Williams, 2003).

African Americans and *The Bible*

An extensive body of historical and theological literature on African American religious practice provides insight into the use of scripture passages and *Bible*-based stories as a way of managing stress (Cone, 2002; Paris, 1995; Pinn, 1999). African

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slaves in the United States learned *The Bible* through sermons; where some themes and stories in *The Bible* were emphasized, whereas others were not (Cone, 2002; Raboteau, 1978). Similar to the lyrics of religious songs, stories from *The Bible* frequently memorized and emphasized among the African slaves included that of God leading the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, Daniel being freed from the lions' den, the Hebrew children escaping from the fiery furnace, and Joshua fighting the Battle of Jericho (Cone, 2002). These scriptures communicated to African slaves their existence as human beings and God's promise of deliverance from their suffering (Cone, 2002; Pinn, 1999).

A womanist perspective of theology suggests an additional reality of God as protector and advisor (rather than deliverer) during times where isolation, alienation, and economic deprivation can occur (Williams, 2003). Reference frequently is made to the passages of the Old Testament where God provided guidance to Hagar, an oppressed slave, to enable her to survive starvation and possible death when she was an outcast in the wilderness of Beersheba (Williams, 2003). Hagar's story in *The Bible* is interpreted as one of survival through managing suffering, rather than deliverance, achieved with God's presence and guidance (Copeland, 2003).

Recent research on religion and health among African Americans has shown that reading *The Bible* or other devotional materials is an important mental health self-management strategy for dealing with daily life struggles (McCauley, Tarpley, Haaz, & Bartlett, 2008; Taylor et al., 2004). For Christian African Americans, the scripture passages in *The Bible* are a source of religious instruction and the communication of a promise of protection from evil situations to those individuals who adhere to the religious doctrines of sacrificing, praying, and reading the word of God (Raboteau, 2001).

Although scholars have speculated that religion and associated religious practices may help protect against depression (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Taylor et al., 2004), few have explored how these scripture passages are used among individuals in response to stressful life events. This article addresses that gap through an exploration of how older Christian African Americans use scripture passages from *The Bible* to cope with adversity in their lives. Also explored is whether there are gender differences in the use of these scripture passages since researchers generally have not conducted subgroup analyses on this topic among African Americans (Taylor, Chatters, & Joe, 2011). This report is a part of a larger study, "Identifying components of a spiritual support intervention for older African Americans with chronic or life threatening illness," that explored how African Americans used a variety of religious practices (songs, scriptures, and prayers) and the personal meanings derived from these practices in the context of the death of a loved one or a life-threatening illness. The parent study consisted of 65 older African Americans having had experiences with the death of a family member or life-threatening illness. To date, one report detailing the use of religious songs used among older African Americans has been published (Hamilton, Sandelowski, Moore, Agarwal, & Koenig, 2013).

Design and Methods

A combined qualitative and quantitative methodology was used to explore African Americans' use of personal meanings

from the use of scripture passages in response to stressful life events. In summary, a qualitative descriptive design (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010) using open-ended semistructured interviews, criterion sampling, and qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to elicit participants' responses regarding these scripture passages. A quantitative descriptive analysis was used to describe the baseline characteristics of the sample and interrater reliability and assess frequencies of types of scriptures used among the participants (Field, 2009). The chi-square and Fisher's exact tests (cells smaller than five) were used to determine whether gender differences in the use of scripture passages were statistically significant (Field, 2009). All quantitative analyses were performed with SPSS version 19. The institutional review board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill approved this study.

Participants

The participants in this report on the use of *The Bible* included 54 African American women and men in the southeastern United States. Inclusion criteria were (a) African American ethnicity by self-report, (b) at least 50 years of age, and (c) having experienced the loss of a loved one or a life-threatening illness. Participants targeted for recruitment were religiously affiliated and likely to use religious practices in their daily lives. However, religious affiliation was neither an inclusion or exclusion criteria. Recruitment efforts involved presentations of the study by the first author; meetings with church elders or ministers; and announcements during regularly scheduled church services, prayer meetings, and other church-based community group meetings. The first author also presented the study during regularly scheduled meetings of an African American cancer support group.

Procedures

The first author conducted semistructured interviews lasting 15–60 minutes in participants' homes or private rooms located in churches. Participants were given a \$25 store gift card at the completion of the interview. Participants were interviewed once, and interviews were conducted during the years 2008 through 2010.

During the interviews, participants were asked to talk candidly about whether and how they used religious songs, scriptures, and prayers to help them when they had a stressful event such as a loss of a loved one or a life-threatening illness. The interviews consisted of three open-ended questions: "Can you recall a time in your life that was particularly stressful for you?", "Tell me about a religious song, scripture, or prayer that helped you during that time," and "Tell me how that song, scripture, and/or prayer helped you during that time."

Data Analysis

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Content analysis of the data consisted of organizing participant's responses by stressful event reported (e.g., loss of a loved one, diagnosis of life-threatening illness), whether a scripture was used, the significance of the scripture passage, and the outcomes derived from using this religious practice. The first author and a divinity school graduate student identified key categories of scripture passages from participants' descriptions of them. Ministers from the African American

religious community provided feedback on the labeling of these categories. Labeling of the categories was also derived from the participants' narratives and from texts on religion, theology, and annotations from a *New King James Version Bible* (NKJV). An initial analysis of the reported scripture passages used led to the construction of seven categories: (a) *Praise and Thanksgiving*, (b) *God as Protector*, (c) *God as Beneficent*, (d) *God as Healer*, (e) *Memory Recall of Past Events*, (f) *Prayers to God*, and (g) *Life after Death* (Table 1). An SPSS database was created to allow for a type of scripture passage from each participant interview to be coded yes, *reflecting a category* (1), or no, *did not reflect a category* (0). Intercoder reliability was evaluated on three separate occasions with the first and third authors using 10%–20% of the sample transcripts. After the third iteration of revisions to bring clarity to the categories, intercoder reliability for the categories of passages from *The Bible* was calculated using Cohen's kappa and deemed satisfactory (0.73–0.84; Burla et al., 2008).

Results

The participants were, on average, 68 years old and primarily women (72.2%), high-school educated (42.6%), retired (64.8%), currently affiliated with Baptist churches (77.8%), and residing in urban areas (53.7%). The participant demographics according to gender are displayed in Table 2. Of the 65 participants in the larger study (Hamilton et al., 2013), 54 participants in this report provided passages from *The Bible*. Of these 54 participants, 25 (46.2%) provided one passage, 22 (40.7%) provided two passages, five (9.2%) provided three passages, and two (3.7%) provided four passages.

The most frequently identified stressful event participants described were the caregiving and ultimate death of a loved one, followed by a life-threatening illness, and stress related to work. The "death of a loved one" category included the caregiving and ultimate death of a spouse, parent, sibling, or child. The "life-threatening illness" category consisted of heart disease, cancer, stroke, and unintentional injuries, all leading causes of death among African Americans (Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, 2010), along with stressful chronic and functionally limiting illnesses such as kidney failure, insulin-dependent diabetes, and arthritis. Work-related stressors were described typically as conflicts with coworkers. Women were more likely to report the death of mother, followed by spouse, as most stressful. Similarly, men were more likely to report the death of their mother as the most stressful event; death of their father was the second most stressful event.

The type of scripture passage used most frequently among women were *God as Protector* ($n = 33$, 71.7%), followed by *Life after Death* ($n = 14$, 30.4%), and least frequently, *Prayers to God* ($n = 1$, 2.2%). Among men, scripture passages used most frequently were *God as Protector* ($n = 7$, 36.8%) and *God as Healer* ($n = 6$, 31.6%). Scripture passages used least frequently among the men were *Memory of Forefathers* ($n = 1$, 5.3%), *Prayers to God* ($n = 1$, 5.3%), and *Life after Death* ($n = 1$, 5.3%). Chi-square and Fisher's exact testing (using SPSS) showed that women and men differed significantly on the frequency with which they used *God as Protector*, *Life after Death*, and *God as Healer* passages (Table 3).

When the type of scripture was examined in relation to gender and the type of stressful event, there were few differences between the women and men (Table 4). When the stressful event was the loss of a loved one, *God as Protector* was the most frequently used and *Prayers to God* was least frequently used. *Life after Death* passages were the second most frequently used among women, whereas *God as Beneficent* and *God as Healer* were the second most frequently used for the men. An interesting gender difference was that, whereas *Life after Death* scripture passages were the most frequently used among women, it was least frequently used among men.

Women and men reported that the most frequently used type of scripture was *God as Protector* when the stressful event was a life-threatening illness. *Life after Death* and *Praise and Thanksgiving* type passages from *The Bible* were the second most frequently used for women, and *God as Healer* was the second most frequently used type of scripture used among men with a life-threatening illness. Few participants reported

TABLE 1. Definitions for Categories of Scripture Passages

Themes for scriptures	Definition
Praise and Thanksgiving	Words in passage focus solely on gratitude, thanksgiving, or praise. No requests of God are being made.
God as Protector	Words in passage highlight God's role as a protector, comforter, and a source of strength. Passage is used to make requests to God for relief of some fear, suffering, or anxiety.
God as Beneficent	Words in passage emphasize a reciprocal relationship with God. Passage reflects expressions of gratitude to God for His goodness and belief that rewards are obtained from a covenant with God.
God as Healer	Scripture passage is a story of God healing the sick; reminder that God is in charge of one's longevity (i.e., God can extend one's life).
Memory of Forefathers	Scripture passage evokes positive memories of an ancestor.
Prayers to God	Passage provides guidance of how to pray to God.
Life After Death	Words in the passage are reminders to the reader that believers transition to a better world after this life.

work-related stressors and using passages from *The Bible* as a mental-health-promoting strategy. However, the women used two types of passages, *God as Protector* and *Life after Death*, for work-related stressors. Men used three passages for work-related stressors: *God as Protector*, *Praise and Thanksgiving*, and *God as Healer*.

In the section that follows, brief descriptions of the type of passages from *The Bible* that were used in response to stressful life events are described. Specific quotes can be found in Document, Supplemental Digital Content 1, which includes significance of the scripture passages to study participants, <http://links.lww.com/NRES/A93>.

God as Protector passages were those emphasizing God's role as protector and comforter and as a source of strength. These scriptures were reminders of God's previous acts of goodness, kindness, and charity with others, and these participants believed that God would do for them what He has done for others. Participants also used these scriptures to communicate to God their requests for relief of fears, suffering, or anxieties.

Scriptures from the Psalms, a book within *The Bible*, were mentioned frequently in this category, with Psalm 23 (the *23rd Psalm*; NKJV) used by 29 of the 54 (54%) participants. Many participants recalled being encouraged to memorize this scripture in their early formative years. The parents and school teachers of many participants informed them that their world would consist of many trials and tribulations, but the text emphasized from the 23rd Psalm—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me"—would comfort them and enable them to endure any adverse situation.

Life after Death passages were those emphasizing God's promise of an eternal life for those believers and followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ. For example, a scripture categorized as *Life after Death* was John 3:16 (NKJV): "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." These *Life after Death* scriptures reminded participants of God's promise of another life free from the pain and suffering experienced in this current life.

God as Beneficent passages were those emphasizing the reciprocal nature of a relationship with God. Scriptures in this category were often expressions of gratitude to God with rewards achieved when there was a covenant with God. Scripture passages for this category were derived from both the Old and New Testament with stories of God fulfilling the promise of blessings and providing guidance to faithful servants.

Praise and Thanksgiving passages emphasized an acknowledgment of and thankfulness to God. When participants used these types of scriptures, there were no specific requests made to God. The most frequent scripture passages for this category were from the Psalms, passages in which the writer of these passages acknowledged God as creator and expressed thanksgiving for His goodness and mercy.

**Men used three passages
for work-related
stressors: *God as
Protector, Praise and
Thanksgiving, and
God as Healer.***

God is Healer passages ranked fourth when the most stressful event was a life-threatening illness and ranked fifth when the most stressful life event was the death of a family member. These scriptures were reminders to participants of God's ability to heal the sick and to extend their longevity. Frequently mentioned scriptures in this category were from the Books of Job, Psalm, Isaiah, and Luke.

Memory of Forefathers passages emphasized the recall or memory of a previous time with a family member. These scriptures learned from parents or grandparents provided a level of comfort derived from cherished memories of some past time with a loved one. For example, one participant recalled favorite scripture

passages that transcended them back in time to the safety of the presence of ancestors.

Passages used as *Prayers to God* were the most infrequently used category of scripture for all three types of stressful life events. Participants described using particular scripture passages as a guide for how to pray to God for their needs or as a conversation with God. For example, one participant referred to Isaiah 38, which is the story of a dying man who prayed to God and as a result had an extra 15 years added to his life. This scripture then became his prayer for longevity during life-threatening events.

Discussion

Similar to the use of religious songs, reading passages from *The Bible* was a self-management strategy promoting mental health for these African Americans experiencing stressful life events. Moreover, participants used scripture passages for guidance, comfort, strength, and peace during sleepless nights or when feeling depressed. However, in comparison with the religious songs used, participants used scripture passages of God's direct word to them and the promise for protection and healing when vulnerable to illness and negative mood states. In some instances, participants reported a reliance on God's word as the sole strategy used that helped them through their traumatic life events. For them, the use of scripture passages was God's way of speaking directly to them, providing specific instruction and guidance. Although African American women are more likely to report religious affiliations and to attend church, this study showed few gender differences in the types of or frequencies with which passages from *The Bible* were used in response to negative mood states experienced during stressful life events.

Among the most notable findings through this exploration of the use of scriptures was the participants' frequent use of passages that emphasized God's ability to protect and heal during the stress of a family death or one's own life-threatening illness. In this study, both men and women used scriptures related to *God as Protector* to reason that God was able to take care of their every need and that ultimately God, not man, was in charge of one's mortality. Interestingly, the 23rd Psalm was the most frequently cited scripture in this category.

TABLE 2. Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample (N = 54)

Variable	Women, n = 39	Men, n = 15	Total, N = 54
Age in years, M (SD)	66.8 (11.8)	73.2 (9.7)	68.7 (11.5)
Education, n (%)			
<High school	8 (20.5)	5 (33.3)	13 (24.1)
High school/GED	16 (41.0)	7 (46.7)	23 (42.3)
>High school	15 (38.5)	3 (20.0)	18 (33.3)
Marital status, n (%)			
Married	14 (35.9)	11 (73.3)	25 (46.3)
Widowed	11 (28.2)	1 (6.7)	12 (22.2)
Separated or divorced	8 (20.5)	2 (13.3)	10 (18.5)
Never married	4 (10.3)	1 (6.7)	5 (9.3)
Employment status, n (%)			
Employed (part-time or full-time)	10 (25.6)	2 (13.3)	12 (22.2)
Retired	24 (61.5)	11 (73.3)	35 (64.8)
Quit because of health	5 (12.8)	2 (13.3)	7 (13.0)
Religious affiliation in early years, n (%)			
Baptist	28 (71.8)	13 (86.7)	41 (75.9)
Methodist	6 (15.5)	1 (6.7)	7 (13.0)
Catholic	5 (12.8)	1 (6.7)	6 (11.1)
Religious affiliation in adult years, n (%)			
Baptist	29 (74.3)	13 (86.7)	42 (77.8)
Methodist	5 (12.8)	0 (0.0)	5 (9.3)
Holiness	2 (5.1)	1 (6.7)	3 (5.6)
Catholic	3 (7.7)	1 (6.7)	4 (7.4)
Place of residence, n (%)			
Urban	19 (48.7)	10 (66.7)	29 (53.7)
Rural	20 (51.3)	5 (33.3)	25 (46.3)
Stressful event: family death, n (%)			
Spouse	11 (28.2)	2 (13.3)	13 (24.1)
Mother	13 (33.3)	7 (46.7)	20 (37.0)
Father	10 (25.6)	8 (53.3)	18 (33.3)
Child	6 (15.4)	1 (6.7)	7 (13.0)
Sibling	8 (20.5)	4 (26.7)	12 (22.2)
Stressful event: illness, n (%)			
Cancer	13 (33.3)	4 (26.7)	17 (31.5)
Heart disease or stroke	6 (15.4)	3 (20.0)	9 (16.7)
Trauma or accident	2 (5.1)	(0.0)	2 (3.7)
Other chronic illness	10 (25.6)	5 (33.3)	15 (27.8)
Stressful event: work related, n (%)	3 (7.7)	2 (13.3)	5 (9.2)

Abbreviation: GED = general educational development.

Participants recalled memorizing the 23rd Psalm during earlier years and using it as an adult when stressed in their daily lives.

Scriptures referring to an eternal *Life after Death* ranked second of the type of scriptures used for all three stressful life events but was the least frequently used among men. The belief in an afterlife reassured these participants that problems associated with this life are temporary and that they would be rewarded

for their obedience to religious doctrine. For Christian African Americans experiencing a family death, it is the belief in this afterlife that gives them comfort during the death of a loved one, in knowing that person has transitioned to a better place.

The *God as Beneficent* and *God as Healer* passages were used more frequently among the men than women when the stressful event was a family death or a life-threatening illness.

God as Beneficent passages emphasized a reciprocal relationship with God, with God rewarding the followers of His teachings. *God as Healer* scriptures provided evidence of healing and control over one's mortality and evidence of His ability to provide deliverance from pain and suffering. This finding is consistent with what historians and theologians have suggested about a Black theology that evolved during slavery, whereby the African slave learned to relate stories and passages from *The Bible* of other oppressed groups to their own situation. An interesting finding was the use of these types of scriptures more among men than women. One explanation could be related to men having a more direct approach with requests for specific help or deliverance from suffering. On the other hand, women may have been more inclined to seek God's guidance for endurance of suffering, which would be consistent with womanist theology.

Praise and Thanksgiving passages were used to thank God for his previous acts of goodness, and although no requests were being made, the underlying belief was that, if God brought a person through some pain and suffering before, that would be repeated. One plausible explanation for the infrequent use of these passages is that the participants were turning to *The Bible* in search of specific texts for support. For example, in contrast to the other more frequently used scripture passages where specific requests were made, the wording of *Praise and Thanksgiving* passages may have been too vague to fit a specific need.

The passages of *Memory of Forefathers* and *Prayers to God* were the least frequently used and likely did not appear to contribute to the mental health of a majority of these participants. *Memory of our Forefathers* passages could have been of any type that served to connect individuals to past lived experiences or to fond memories of family members who died. In addition, the recollection of an ancestor through

Whereby the African slave learned to relate stories and passages from the Bible of other oppressed groups to their own situation.

a story connected to a scripture passage was likely comforting to some through the identification of a family member perceived as being strong. *Prayers to God* were passages generally worded as prayers to God to address any situation. *Prayers to God* were likely infrequently used because they were structured and did not allow participants to personalize them for a specific need.

Participants in this study were older African American adults, and therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other age or racial and ethnic minority groups. Participants were also predominantly those with current Christian religious affiliations, so it was not possible to explore the use of scriptures from *The Bible* among those persons unaffiliated with religious groups who might respond to life stressors using these or other similar strategies. Although men were fewer in number, the use of the scriptures they used was not greatly different from the women.

Increasingly, nurses are recognizing the importance of addressing the spiritual care needs of a culturally diverse patient population. The information presented here can be used to assist nurses to use passages from *The Bible*. For example, a baseline nursing assessment might include eliciting the words from a favorite scripture passage that could be displayed in the patients' room, bedside chart, or communicated to family and friends. Then, should the patient become distressed or experience a negative mood, the words to the scripture passage may be used as a strategy to comfort, relax, or distract the patient. Patients who use passages from *The Bible* to self-manage anxiety or depressive moods in stressful situations may have difficulty remembering the words to a favorite scripture passage and need assistance to use this strategy. More importantly, however, because the nurse is frequently the first person present with the patient during a crisis and often the sole healthcare provider present at the end of life, reading a favorite scripture passage to the patient may be a way of addressing patients' spiritual needs.

Further research is needed to explore whether similar strategies are used among African Americans who are not religiously affiliated. This inquiry is important so that assumptions about the use of religious practices, particularly those in this report, are not generalized to all African American patients. Additional research is needed to examine empirically the relationship among the use of religious songs, scriptures, and prayers and quality of life among this population. Finally, it is important to evaluate the feasibility of nurses assisting patients to use the mental-health-promoting strategy presented in this report.

Religious practices in the form using scripture passages that are read or memorized are used as a mental-health-promoting strategy among African Americans. Although future research on this topic is warranted, these results suggest that religious practices, at least for religiously affiliated African Americans, extend beyond praying and church attendance. The information presented in this article has practical uses for nurses who are seeking an acceptable and sensitive way of approaching

TABLE 3. Type of Passage Used, by Gender

	Women, n = 39		Men, n = 15		χ ²
	n	(%)	n	(%)	
God as Protector	33	71.7	7	36.8	6.92**
Life after Death	14	30.4	1	5.3	4.80*
Praise and Thanksgiving	7	15.2	3	15.8	.00
God as Beneficent	6	13.0	4	21.1	.66
Memory of Forefathers	5	10.9	1	5.3	.50
God as Healer	3	6.5	6	31.6	7.08**
Prayers to God	1	2.2	1	5.3	.43

Note. Participants could use more than one type of passage.
*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.

TABLE 4. Type of Scripture Used by Gender for Most Stressful Event

	Women, n = 39		Men, n = 15		χ^2
	n	(%)	n	(%)	
Family death event					
God as Protector	26	83.9	6	40.0	9.19**
Life after Death	9	29.0	1	6.7	2.97
Praise and Thanksgiving	5	16.1	2	13.3	.06
God as Beneficent	5	16.1	4	26.7	.71
Memory of Forefathers	3	9.7	1	6.7	.12
God as Healer	3	9.7	4	26.7	2.26
Prayers to God	1	3.2	1	6.7	.29
Illness event					
God as Protector	15	83.3	4	36.4	6.67**
Life after Death	8	44.4	1	9.1	3.99*
Praise and Thanksgiving	4	22.2	1	9.1	.83
God as Beneficent	1	5.6	1	9.1	.13
Memory of Forefathers	2	11.1	1	9.1	.03
God as Healer	1	5.6	2	18.2	1.17
Prayers to God	1	5.6	1	9.1	.13
Work-related event					
God as Protector	3	75.0	1	50.0	.38
Life after Death	2	50.0	0	0	1.50
Praise and Thanksgiving	0	0	1	50.0	2.40
God as Beneficent	0	0	0	0	—
Memory of Forefathers	0	0	0	0	—
God as Healer	0	0	1	50.0	—
Prayers to God	0	0	0	0	—

Note. Participants could have used more than one type of passage in response to a stressful event.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

mental health issues and also a way to address the spiritual care needs of culturally diverse patient populations. ▀

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