Self-Directing Religious Coping: A Deistic God, Abandoning God, or No God at All?

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Self-directing religious coping has been correlated with both positive and negative outcome variables in previous research. The purpose of this study was to explore the potential meaning behind these mixed findings by clarifying the nature of the self-directing religious coping construct. A new set of subscales was constructed that operationalized different aspects of the construct. This scale, the original Religious Problem Solving Scale, and mental-health measures were given to 262 undergraduate students at a moderate-sized midwestern university. Two factors were identified with the revised self-directing measure: a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God factor and an abandoning God factor. The Abandoning God Subscale was more highly correlated with the original Self-Directing Scale than was the deistic God measure. The Deistic and Supportive God Subscale was correlated with both positive and negative mental-health outcomes, whereas the abandoning God measure consistently related to poorer outcomes.

Many people reportedly use religion to help them cope with life's difficulties (see Pargament 1997, for a review). In one of the early empirical studies, Pargament and his colleagues (1988) created a dispositional measure of religious coping that assessed how people typically use religion as a way of enhancing the sense of control in coping. This measure consisted of three different religious coping scales—collaborative, self-directing, and deferring religious coping methods. Control was seen as derived through a relationship with God (collaborative), through the freedom God gives people to solve problems themselves (self-directing), and through the delegation of responsibility for problem solving to God (deferring). These forms of religious coping have received considerable attention over the past decade.

As theorized, researchers have found that collaborative religious coping is associated with positive outcomes, such as increased self-esteem and lower levels of depression (Pargament et al. 1988; Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch 2000). As expected, the deferring approach appears to have mixed implications, relating to higher levels of depression and lower levels of competence, but also to higher levels of spiritual well-being (Pargament et al. 1988; Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch 2000). Surprisingly, self-directing coping has also been associated with mixed outcomes. More self-directing religious coping has been related to higher levels of self-esteem and belief in personal control. The Self-Directing Religious Coping Scale (SDS) has also been linked to higher levels of depression and lower levels of spiritual well-being (Hathaway and Pargament 1990; Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch 2000). The mixed findings generated from the self-directing measure have been somewhat surprising given the theoretical underpinnings of the construct. The construct was intended to reflect a deistic view of God and regarded as an active problem-solving

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style (Pargament et al. 1988). This style was considered similar to Fromm's humanistic religion, in which the power of the individual is highlighted and self-realization is the focus. Given the links between the SDS and internal locus of control, it was expected that those who engage in a self-directing religious coping stance would report better outcomes on a consistent basis.

One potential explanation for this inconsistency may lie in the operationalization of the construct itself. Perhaps the SDS does not measure what it was intended to measure. For instance, the SDS item—"I act to solve my problems without God's help"—suggests that the person is active and God is inactive, but it does not describe the freedom God gives the individual to solve his or her problems. People could conceivably interpret the SDS items in several ways. One interpretation, consistent with the original purpose of the scale, is that God has indeed provided the individual the ability and freedom to engage in the problem-solving process. A second interpretation is that God does not intervene but is supportive of the individual throughout the coping process. A third and very different way to interpret the SDS items is that the person must cope alone because God has abandoned him or her. To the extent that people interpret the SDS items in this latter fashion, we might expect negative correlations between SDS and indices of well-being. Other studies have linked negative perceptions of God, spiritual discontent, and feelings of spiritual abandonment to emotional distress (Exline, Yali, and Sanderson 2000; Phillips, Lakin, and Pargament 2002). Finally, SDS items might be endorsed because the participant is not very religious and thus does not involve God in the religious coping process. This interpretation could lead to still different outcomes from those presented above.

This study attempted to clarify the meaning of the SDS through the creation of subscales that further delineated the nature of self-directing approaches. The major research questions were as follows. (1) What specifically does the SDS measure: a deistic view of God, a supportive but nonintervening God, an abandoning God, or a lack of interest in God's involvement? To answer this question, we examined the relationships between the original SDS and the refined SDS subscales. (2) How do each of these SDS subscales relate to outcome measures? It was hypothesized that the deistic and supportive but nonintervening God viewpoints would relate to positive outcomes, while the abandoning God perspective would correlate with negative outcomes.

Methods

Participants were 262 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology courses at a midwestern state university. One-quarter of the participants were male (66), 88 percent (229) were European American, 6.6 percent (17) African American, 2.3 percent (6) Hispanic, and 2.7 percent (7) labeled themselves as "other." The mean age of the sample was 19.4 years ($SD = 2.3$). Almost all participants were single (97 percent), with 3 percent cohabiting or married. Just over one-third of the participants were Roman Catholic (36.4 percent), with 57.8 percent Protestant, 3.9 percent other, and 1.9 percent atheist. Fifty-nine percent of the sample prayed at least once a week, with 53 percent of the sample attending church at least once a month. Sixty-one percent of the sample considered themselves to be at least moderately religious and 67 percent at least moderately spiritual.

Reliability and validity information for all measures can be found within the references. The original Religious Problem Solving Scale (RPSS) (Pargament et al. 1988) was included within the survey. A new set of subscales was created to measure the different interpretations of the original self-directing religious coping scale—the RSDS. To measure the perspective that God has provided the individual the ability and freedom to solve problems on one's own, a Deistic God Subscale of 18 items was created. To explicate the view that God is supportive, but does not intervene within the problem-solving process, an 18-item Supportive But Nonintervening God Subscale was developed. Finally, to operationalize the perception that God has abandoned the person, an 18-item Abandoning God Subscale was constructed.

Three items were initially developed for each aspect of the problem-solving process: define the problem, generate alternatives, select a solution, implement the solution, redefine the problem, and engage in self-maintenance strategies. This format was used within the original RPSS (Pargament et al. 1988). After items were generated, five graduate students were presented with the construct underlying each subscale. They were then told to categorize each item according to which construct they believed the item was measuring. Those items that were correctly identified were retained. Two items for each aspect of the problem-solving process within each subscale were kept. Coders had 100 percent correct identification of these items within their respective subconstruct. The final result was three 12-item subscales within the RSDS.

General religious measures included the Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (Hoge 1972) and the Quest Scale (Batson and Schoenrade 1991). Individual items measured church attendance, frequency of prayer, and self-perceived religion and spirituality.

Self-esteem was measured by the Rosenberg (1972) Self-Esteem Scale. Locus of control was measured through the Personal Control and Chance Control Scales (Levenson 1981). Active problem-solving style was measured through the Behavioral Attributes of Psychosocial Competence (BAPC) Scale (Tyler 1978). The psychopathology measures of depression, anxiety, and hostility were taken from subscales of the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis and Melisaratos 1983). Also included were measures of life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1985) and spiritual well-being (Paloutzian and Ellison 1982). The Spiritual Well-Being Scale consists of two subscales: Existential Well-Being and Religious Well-Being.

Participants were informed of the opportunity to participate in the survey through bulletin-board announcements on campus as well as through the Experimetrix Internet-based website. Informed consent forms and surveys were distributed in group format. Students received experimental credit for participating in the study. A subset of students took the survey twice so that test-retest data could be collected on the RSDS. Data were analyzed through SPSS-11.

Results

Factor Analyses and Psychometric Properties of the RSDS

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted on the RSDS item pool. The first exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the full sample of 262 participants. The Scree Test applied to the eigenvalues demonstrated a cutoff at two factors instead of the expected three. The two factors were extracted using the maximum likelihood method and were subjected to an Oblimin rotation because the separate factors were expected to correlate. The items measuring the deistic God and the supportive but nonintervening God constructs loaded highest on the first factor and the abandoning God items loaded highest on the second factor. Most of the items did not load cleanly (i.e., had factor loadings greater than |0.30| on both factors).

A second exploratory factor analysis was conducted with 12 items to decrease the intercorrelations among the two factors. The 12 items were selected based on four criteria. First, the items had to load highly on their respective factor within the initial exploratory factor analysis (i.e., factor loadings of at least 0.45). Of the 12 items eventually chosen, only two had factor loadings below 0.60 on their respective factor. Second, items had to represent equally the two theorized factors; half (i.e., six items) of the 12 items were chosen to represent the abandoning God construct, one-quarter of the items (i.e., three items) were chosen to represent the deistic God construct, and one-quarter for the supportive but nonintervening God construct. We assumed that these two subconstructs would overlap to a large degree, based on the results of the first exploratory factor analysis and their theoretical similarity. Third, items were chosen that best represented all six phases of the problem-solving process, as feedback from preliminary reports suggested that some of the items did not significantly differentiate among the steps of the problem-solving process.

Fourth, feedback from participants revealed that some items appeared redundant, thus eliminating these items appeared beneficial.

The second exploratory factor analysis was conducted along with a confirmatory factor analysis to provide empirical support for the theoretical model. The original sample was split in half, with participants randomly assigned to either subsample. The second exploratory factor analysis used a maximum likelihood extraction and an Oblimin rotation. The Scree Test again confirmed a clear break between the second and third factors. The eigenvalues for the first two factors were 4.78 and 3.05, respectively. The two factors accounted for 65.25 percent (40 percent and 25.4 percent) of the total variance. In comparison, the next largest factor had an eigenvalue of only 0.8 and accounted for only 6.5 percent of the variance. All 12 items had loadings of at least 0.49 and did not load on more than one factor (a significant factor loading was 0.30). The RSDS items and their factor loadings are reported in the Appendix.

The final 12 items were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using structural equation modeling via Lisrel 8.3 (maximum likelihood estimation) to assess the adequacy of the two-factor model in accounting for the interitem correlations. Though the chi-square was significant (χ^2 (51) = 86.21, $p = 0.002$), Bentler (1990) suggested that sample size could affect this statistic. CFI was used to assess model fit due to its resistance to errors associated with sample size, as well as its usefulness in comparing nonnested models (Bentler 1990). CFI values of 0.90 and larger indicate good fit, and the CFI was 0.94 within this model. Further, the RMSEA was acceptable at 0.07, as Brown and Cudek (1989) suggested that RMSEA values at or below 0.08 indicate a good fit. The average absolute standardized residual, a measure of the difference between the observed covariances and the covariances predicted by the model, was 0.057 and 100 percent of the residuals were between –0.10 and +0.10. All the standardized parameter estimates were significant. The estimates ranged from 0.55 to 0.82 for the items on the DSGS, and 0.59 to 0.83 for the AGS. Thus, the confirmatory factor analysis provides empirical support for the two-factor model, suggesting it is a good fit for the data.

A second CFA was conducted with the same 12 items, now specifying three factors so as to determine if the deistic and supportive but nonintervening God items might separate into their own factors. This three-factor CFA resulted in statistics that were very similar to the first CFA (e.g., χ^2 (51) = 77.31, $p = 0.01$). Thus the three-factor model does not appear to add any significant information to the theory. The RSDS is best explained in terms of two factors, an abandoning God subconstruct and a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God subconstruct. All future references to the Abandoning God Subscale (AGS) and the Deistic and Supportive But Nonintervening God Subscale (DSGS) refer to the respective six-item subscales tested through the second exploratory factor analysis and first confirmatory factor analysis.

The DSGS had a Cronbach alpha of 0.86 and the AGS 0.87. Test-retest reliability for the subscales over an 18-day period was 0.63 for the DSGS and 0.77 for the AGS ($n = 44$). The means for the three RPSS subscales in this study were very similar to those in the Pargament et al. study (1988). Self-directing religious coping had a mean per item rating of 2.7 ($SD = 1.05$) on the five-point Likert scale, collaborative religious coping a 2.57 ($SD = 0.97$), and deferring religious coping 1.99 ($SD = 0.77$). Thus, deferring items were used "occasionally" whereas collaborative and self-directing items were endorsed between "occasionally" and "fairly often." The new DSGS was the most highly endorsed subscale, with a mean rating per item of 3.4 ($SD = 1.03$). There was a slight negative skew to the distribution of this subscale. Abandoning God items were the least endorsed, with a mean per item of 1.3 ($SD = 0.59$), indicating that participants rarely viewed God as leaving them to cope with problems on their own. There was a large positive skew in the distribution of scores for this subscale.

Correlations

To answer the first research question regarding what the SDS measures, we ran Pearson bivariate correlations and partial correlations among the subscales of the RSDS, the RPSS, and

TABLE 1
PEARSON BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION VARIABLES (PARTIAL CORRELATIONS IN PARENTHESES)[1]

	Deistic and Supportive But Nonintervening God	Abandoning God	Self-Directing
Self-directing R.C.	0.01	0.44**	—
Deferring R.C.	0.02	−.23**	−0.57**
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(−0.52**)
Collaborative R.C.	0.15*	−0.33**	−0.74**
	(0.20**)	(0.01)	(−0.70**)
Intrinsic religion	0.06	−0.38**	−0.77**
	(0.10)	(−0.09)	(−0.74**)
Extrinsic religion	0.36**	0.12	0.33**
	(0.38**)	(0.03)	(0.27**)
Religious quest	0.17**	0.05	0.04
	(0.19*)	(0.05)	(−0.01)
Self-perceived religiosity	0.14*	−0.30**	−0.62**
	(0.20*)	(−0.04)	(−0.57**)
Self-perceived spirituality	0.05	−0.26**	−0.55**
	(0.06)	(−0.03)	(−0.49**)
Frequency of prayer	0.11	−0.37**	−0.65**
	(0.11)	(−0.11)	(−0.57**)
Church attendance	−0.05	−0.34**	−0.62**
	(−0.12)	(−0.12)	(−0.53**)

[1]The numbers in parentheses indicate the partial correlation after controlling for the other two religious coping measures.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

other religious measures (see Table 1). SDS was not significantly correlated with DSGS. SDS had a moderately high correlation with AGS. Thus, SDS appeared to be more linked to an abandoning God construct than a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God construct.

We compared the intercorrelations between the SDS, DSGS, and AGS with other religious variables. Endorsement of SDS items was related to higher levels of extrinsic religiosity and lower levels of intrinsic religiosity, and not significantly correlated with the quest orientation. Those who scored higher on SDS also reported less frequent church attendance, prayer, and self-reported religiosity and spirituality. When controlling for AGS and DSGS, SDS had the same significant correlates with the religious measures, often with slightly lower effect sizes (see Table 1).

DSGS was significantly related to extrinsic religious motivation, a quest orientation, self-perceived religiosity, and collaborative religious coping. DSGS was not significantly related to intrinsic motivation, frequency of prayer, church attendance, self-reported spirituality, or self-directing or deferring religious coping ($p > 0.05$). When controlling for AGS and SDS, DSGS had the same significant correlates with the religious measures, often with slightly lower effect sizes.

AGS was inversely correlated with the deferring and collaborative styles. That is, the more participants endorsed items suggesting God had abandoned them and left them to cope by themselves, the less likely they were to endorse items that implied they gave the problem to God or worked with God in the coping process. The correlations between the AGS and general religious variables were similar to those of the SDS, but the sizes of these correlations were smaller (see Table 1). Individuals who endorsed more AGS items reported lower levels of self-perceived

TABLE 2
PEARSON BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COPING AND OUTCOME VARIABLES (PARTIAL CORRELATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	Deistic and Supportive God	Abandoning God	Self-Directing	Deferring	Collaborative
Self-esteem	0.03	−0.17**	−0.10	0.10	0.13*
	(−0.02)[1]	(−0.16**)[2]	(−0.02)[3]		
Personal control	0.24**	0.07	0.31**	−0.28**	−0.21
	(0.24**)	(−0.04)	(0.28**)		
Chance control	0.10	0.12	0.22**	−0.12	−0.18**
	(0.17**)	(0.07)	(0.15*)		
Active problem solving	0.06	−0.17**	−0.09	0.16**	0.16*
	(0.02)	(−0.15*)	(−0.02)		
Anxiety	0.22**	0.15*	0.07	−0.09	−0.07
	(0.28**)	(0.19**)	(−0.04)		
Depression	0.15**	0.08	0.02	−0.05	−0.05
	(0.23**)	(0.15*)	(−0.06)		
Hostility	0.17**	0.12	0.08	−0.06	−0.07
	(0.24**)	(0.18*)	(−0.03)		
Life satisfaction	0.13*	−0.21**	−0.14*	0.17**	0.20**
	(0.05)	(−0.21**)	(−0.03)		
Spiritual well-being	0.20**	−0.46**	−0.60**	0.46**	0.60**
	(0.14*)	(−0.31**)	(−0.52**)		
Existential well-being	0.10	−0.29**	−0.20**	0.18**	0.21**
	(0.00)	(−0.26**)	(−0.07)		
Religious well-being	0.21*	−0.47**	−0.75**	0.56**	0.74**
	(0.24**)	(−0.26**)	(−0.70**)		

[1]Controlling for the AGS and self-directing religious coping.
[2]Controlling for the DSGS and self-directing religious coping.
[3]Controlling for the DSGS and the AGS.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

religiosity, spirituality, and intrinsic religious motivation. Further, participants who viewed God as abandoning them reported they did not frequently attend church or engage in prayer. When controlling for DSGS and SDS, AGS no longer had significant correlates with the religious measures.

To investigate the second research question concerning the implications of different forms of self-directing religious coping, we ran Pearson bivariate correlations and partial correlations between the RSDS subscales and the different outcome measures (see Table 2). The original self-directing, collaborative, and deferring religious coping measures were included in this table to provide comparisons with the two new subscales, DSGS and AGS.

The DSGS had mixed implications. DSGS was significantly correlated with personal control. Participants who reported they viewed God as deistic and supportive but nonintervening also were more likely to endorse the psychopathology symptoms of anxiety, depression, and hostility. Finally, DSGS had a positive relationship with religious well-being, spiritual well-being, and life satisfaction. When controlling for the AGS and SDS scores, the DSGS maintained its positive correlations with most of the outcome measures. The DSGS no longer was significantly associated with life satisfaction but was correlated with chance control in the partial correlations.

Those who felt that God had abandoned them and left them to solve problems on their own had lower levels of self-esteem and less of an active problem-solving style. The AGS was also related to higher reports of anxiety. Finally, those who felt more alienated from God in the problem-solving process reported lower levels of life satisfaction and spiritual, religious, and existential well-being. Partialling out the DSGS and the SD subscale scores, the AGS maintained these positive associations and also was significantly correlated with anxiety and depression.

The SDS's associations with the outcome variables were similar to the AGS. SDS was positively correlated with personal and chance control and inversely related to life satisfaction, spiritual well-being, religious well-being, and existential well-being. The partial correlations between the SDS and the outcome measures were similar except that self-directing religious coping no longer was significantly correlated with life satisfaction and existential well-being.

Discussion

Research Question 1: What Does the Self-Directing Religious Coping Scale Measure?

This study explored three different interpretations of the original SDS measure. The scale could measure the view that an individual solves problems independently from God (1) because God has abandoned the individual, (2) because God has given the person the ability and freedom to act independently, or (3) because God is supportive but does not intervene on the person's behalf. Each of these potential explanations for the self-directing religious problem-solving style was operationalized through items on a new set of subscales, the Revised Self-Directing Scale. After a set of preliminary analyses and factor analyses, 12 of the original 54 items were kept. Six items represented the abandoning God concept, and six items portrayed the deistic and supportive but nonintervening God construct. These two subscales demonstrated adequate internal and temporal reliability, though the test-retest correlation for the Abandoning God Subscale was moderately low at 0.65. Construct validity was supported when the items from the two subscales loaded on different factors in a forced two-factor rotated analysis.

Does the Self-Directing Scale measure perceptions of an alienating God? The SDS correlated more highly with the AGS than did the DSGS. The moderate correlation between the original SDS and the AGS suggests that these scales have much in common. Further, the pattern of correlations between these two scales and the religious measures was similar. At least some of the participants who endorse self-directing items may be doing so with the belief that they must solve problems independently because God has left them in their time of need. Yet it is important to remember that the correlation was only moderate; the effect size was not so high as to suggest that the SDS and AGS were measuring the same construct. Thus, the Self-Directing Scale appears to measure more than just the view that God has abandoned the person. Even so, the correlation between the AGS and the SDS is surprising. The creators of this scale did not intend to assess an abandoning God with the original self-directing religious coping scale (see Pargament et al. 1988). The construct they put forth was more tied to the Deistic God Subscale created in this study.

Did some individuals who endorsed self-directing items do so because they perceive a deistic God who has given them the gifts to act on their own? According to this study, the answer is mostly no. Though the original self-directing scale was intended to assess a deistic God, there was a small, nonsignificant correlation between the SDS and DSGS in this study. The pattern of correlations between the DSGS and the outcome variables also differed markedly from the correlations between the SDS and outcome variables. Thus, the original scale does not appear to tap into the deistic construct. In hindsight, given the content of the self-directing items, this is not too surprising. The items leave much room for interpretation, and do not make explicit mention of a deistic God (e.g., see the Appendix).

Overall, the evidence suggests that the SDS measures an abandoning God to a moderate degree but does not measure a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God. What else might

account for how participants answer the self-directing items? Another interpretation of the SDS items is that individuals who place little importance on God or religion incorporate God less within the problem-solving process. Higher levels of a self-directing religious coping style were correlated with much lower levels of self-perceived religiosity, intrinsic religious orientation, church attendance, and frequency of prayer. It is possible, then, that with at least a subset of the population, self-directing items were endorsed because of a "lack of interest in God."

To summarize, the SDS does not appear to be a measure of a perception of a deistic God. The Self-Directing Scale moderately correlates with an abandoning God concept, suggesting that at least a component of the variance within the SDS reflects this subconstruct. The self-directing scale also appears to reflect less salience of the concept of God, though more research is needed here.

Question 2: How Do the Deistic God and Abandoning God Styles Relate to Outcome Variables?

As predicted, the DSGS and AGS had different patterns of correlation with the outcome variables. Overall, belief in a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God in problem solving had mixed psychological implications. Though higher endorsement of DSGS was related to stronger beliefs in personal control, life satisfaction, and personal and spiritual well-being, it was also tied to greater anxiety, hostility, and depression. Those who endorse DSGS items appear to see themselves as responsible for the resolution of their problems. However, when faced with the limits of their control, they may lack beliefs in another benevolent source of external control—the divine. Perhaps this sense of vulnerability leaves them more likely to experience emotional distress.

Self-efficacy may play a critical moderating role in the relationship between DSGS and distress. For those high in self-efficacy, the lack of belief in an intervening God may not be particularly problematic. However, people with lower self-efficacy may experience more difficulty if they believe that God cannot intervene directly in their situations. In this vein, Bickel and colleagues (1998) reported that in situations with low personal control, frequent endorsement of self-directing religious coping was related to higher levels of depression while collaborative coping was associated with lower levels of depression. Future research could explore whether perceived self-efficacy in dealing with a stressful life event may moderate the relationship between DSGS and outcomes.

The perception that the individual must cope alone because God has abandoned him or her had negative implications. Self-directing coping that is tied to an abandoning God was related to lower levels of self-esteem and less of an active problem-solving strategy. Beliefs in an abandoning God were also correlated with higher levels of anxiety as well as lower levels of life satisfaction and spiritual well-being. The belief that a higher power has left the person to cope on his or her own is far from comforting. This finding is consistent with other studies that have examined the implications of negative perceptions of God in the coping process (Exline, Yali, and Sanderson 2000; Mickley et al. 1998; Pargament et al. 1998).

Limitations and Implications

This study is limited by the cross-sectional design, the young white Christian sample, and its self-report bias. The revised measure is likely most fitting for persons who identify as Jewish or Christian. In spite of these limitations, there are important implications of this study. First, self-directing religious coping is a multidimensional construct that requires more refined assessment. The Abandoning God Subscale and the Deistic and Supportive But Nonintervening God Subscale may offer a clearer understanding of the individual's religious coping than the Self-Directing Scale. Second, the sense that the individual has been abandoned by God represents a "religious

red flag" (Pargament et al. 2001). Although it is uncommon, those who report such a belief may be more likely to experience distress. Interventions that help people resolve their spiritual struggles would then be warranted (see Phillips, Lakin, and Pargament 2002). Third, a deistic and supportive but nonintervening God problem-solving style is a newly identified approach with mixed implications that deserve further study. As we take a closer look at particular methods of religious coping, we are learning that they are more complex and multifaceted than initially imagined.

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Appendix: Religion and Problem Solving

Presented below are some more statements concerning the role of religion in dealing with problems. Again, please read each statement carefully, think about how often the statement applies to you, and circle the number that best indicates this.

Never	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Very Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Deistic and Supportive God Items

1. I believe that God gives me the freedom to view an event however I see fit. (D, Df)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.49, −0.12)[1]
2. I feel that God grants me the courage to act on a situation myself. (D, I)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.90, −0.29)
3. I believe that God provides me the intelligence to make decisions about situations on my own. (D, R)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.85, −0.19)
4. Though God cannot show me how to deal with events, I know He supports the ideas I come up with. (S, G)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.61, −0.11)
5. I make decisions about what to do myself knowing God is there to support me. (S, Se)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.65, −0.21)
6. I feel that God is with me during those times that I am upset about events, even though He cannot change things. (S, M)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.65, −0.11)

Abandoning God Items

7. I try to make sense of situations on my own because God has abandoned me. (A, Df)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.85, −0.19)
8. I think about what to do without God's help, as He isn't there for me. (A, G)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.53, −0.00)
9. I choose how to deal with problems without God's involvement because He has forsaken me. (A, Se)
   1 2 3 4 5 (0.84, −0.15)
10. I act on my own to deal with a problem because God has abandoned me. (A, I)
    1 2 3 4 5 (0.84, −0.15)
11. I deal with events on my own because God has left me alone. (A, R)
    1 2 3 4 5 (0.91, −0.21)
12. I manage my feelings on my own because God refuses to help. (A, M)
    1 2 3 4 5 (0.91, −0.22)

Steps in the Problem-Solving Process

De = Defining the Problem
G = Generating Solutions
S = Selecting a Solution
I = Implementing the Solution
R = Redefine the Problem
M = Self-Maintenance

[1]Factor loadings of the item with its corresponding subscale and the subsequent subscale, respectively.