



a ministry of prayer and learning devoted to
the School of the Spirit

The Tiny Grain of Wheat that Falls

Love's Lessons in Failure and Loss

Stephanie Ford

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Jesus calls us into abundant life--so seasons of loss, failure, and grief feel like abandonment. Yet the many voices calling one to "pick yourself up" and choose happiness may prevent the deeper awakenings found in the impasse of that dark night, in the surrender to Divine care (without ready answers). What can we learn--or unlearn--in such times? How can we as spiritual caregivers, guides, and as seekers ourselves listen, attend to the quickening of God's love, and wade through the waters of anxiety that come in unknowing? What is that patient energy

that the Spirit invites as we remain present in emptiness? How do we care for relationships, connect in community, and live out vocation when nothing works as it did before? As we consider the impasse we face in our global community, too, how may we lean into the Spirit despite the anxieties and fears around us? How may we be vessels of peace and hope to our neighbors? Together, let us listen to Scripture, to wise ones, to each other, and to the Spirit ... and discover how we may nourish those tender sprouts of new birth.

For 10 years, Stephanie taught Christian Spirituality at the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana, a rich time of learning and creativity. In 2006, Stephanie and Les Williams adopted a little girl from India, Deepmala--and the life-changing vocation of parenting began. Then, in 2009, their family returned to North Carolina and in 2011, Stephanie began her current position as Minister of Christian Formation at Binkley Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, NC (<http://www.binkleychurch.org/about>). Stephanie is ordained through the Alliance of Baptists and completed a certificate in spiritual direction. For the last 15 years, she has also served as a spiritual director.