

Ill-Fated Expedition

In her remarkable book, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, Annie Dillard tells about the ill-fated Franklin Expedition of 1845. The explorers sailed from England to find the Northwest Passage across the Arctic Ocean. They put aboard their two sailing ships many things they didn't need: a 1,200-volume library, fine china, crystal goblets and sterling silverware.

Amazingly, each ship took only a 12-day supply of coal for their auxiliary steam engines.

The ships became trapped in vast frozen plains of Arctic ice. After several months, Lord Franklin died. The men decided to trek to safety in small groups, but none survived. Two officers pulled a large sled more than 65 miles across the treacherous ice. When rescuers found their bodies, they discovered that the sled was filled with "a great deal of table silver." By carrying what they didn't need, these men were doomed to failure.

Before we get too critical of their actions, we ought to ask ourselves: Are we guilty of doing the same?

Do we drag baggage that we don't need through life – such as evil thoughts or bad habits? What about sins and failures for which we can't seem to forgive ourselves?

As Hebrews 12:1 directs: Let's determine to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us."

--Beecher Hunter