

Sacrifice in the Snow

What is the best characterization of love and friendship? Many descriptions, and all of them accurate, could be applied to these relationships. Perhaps the best one, however, is shown in a story that occurred in the Antarctic.

In 1908, Irish explorer Ernest Shackleton headed an Antarctic expedition attempting to reach the South Pole. They came closer than any before but, 97 miles short of the pole, had to turn back.

In his diary, Shackleton told of the time when their food supplies were exhausted save for one last ration of hardtack, a dried sort of biscuit, that was distributed to each man. Some of the men took snow, melted it and made tea while consuming their biscuit. Others, however, stowed the hardtack in their food sacks, saving it for a last moment of hungry desperation.

The fire was built up, and weary, exhausted men climbed into their sleeping bags to face a restless sleep, tossing and turning. Shackleton said that he was almost asleep when, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed one of his most trusted men sitting up in his bag and looking about to see if anyone was watching.

Shackleton's heart sank within him as this man began to reach toward the food sack of the man next to him. Shackleton watched as the man opened the food sack, took his own hardtack and put it in the other man's sack.

What does this story represent? The answer is sacrificial giving. That quality is at the heart of all truly great relationships. Jesus Himself taught and demonstrated the power of this principle in His life and death on the cross.

And every day, in the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home, our associates practice sacrificial giving. It is the centerpiece of our mission, and it is the hallmark of our reputation.

--Beecher Hunter