

**NOOMA® Shells** | 020 Rob Bell

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Published by Zondervan, 5300 Patterson Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49530, USA.

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Printed in the United States of America

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"I'm not that convinced that that many people really truly need an even better cell phone, with more features. But it seems like a lot of people never stop moving, going from place to place and meeting to meeting ... so busy. And yet life in some sense is passing them by."

Do you have a cell phone? A laptop? A BlackBerry?  
Do these things help you "get it done"?

How do you feel about the pace of your life?

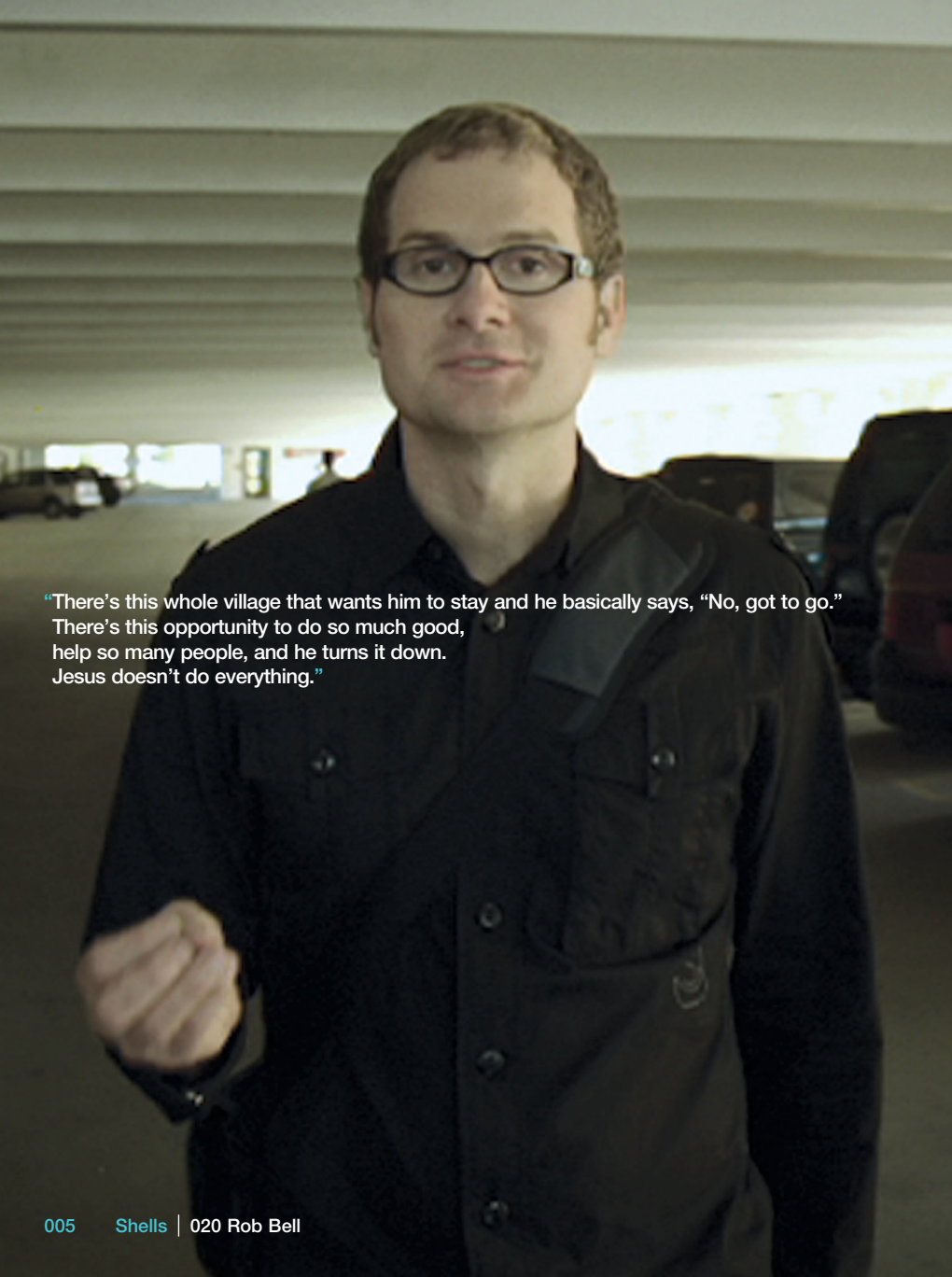
In what ways do you feel life is passing you by?

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”

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Mark 1:35-38 (TNIV)



“There’s this whole village that wants him to stay and he basically says, “No, got to go.”  
There’s this opportunity to do so much good,  
help so many people, and he turns it down.  
Jesus doesn’t do everything.”

How could Jesus walk away from this village of people?

Have you ever walked away from something “good”?

Why or why not?

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven,  
Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:51 (NIV)

Then Jesus went through the towns and villages,  
teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

Luke 13:22 (TNIV)

While he was on the way to Jerusalem,  
he was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

Luke 17:11 (NASB)

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them,  
“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,  
and all things that are written by the prophets  
concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.”

Luke 18:31 (NKJV)

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:28 (NIV)



“You begin to get the sense after a while that Jesus is headed somewhere and that ‘somewhere’ is Jerusalem. Now it’s not like he’s some sort of preprogrammed robot who has no control over his life. He gets interrupted along the way. Actually, a lot of his teachings are his responses to the questions that people ask him along the way. But he can’t be everything to everybody.”

Do you know someone who has this kind of purpose?  
How is their life different?





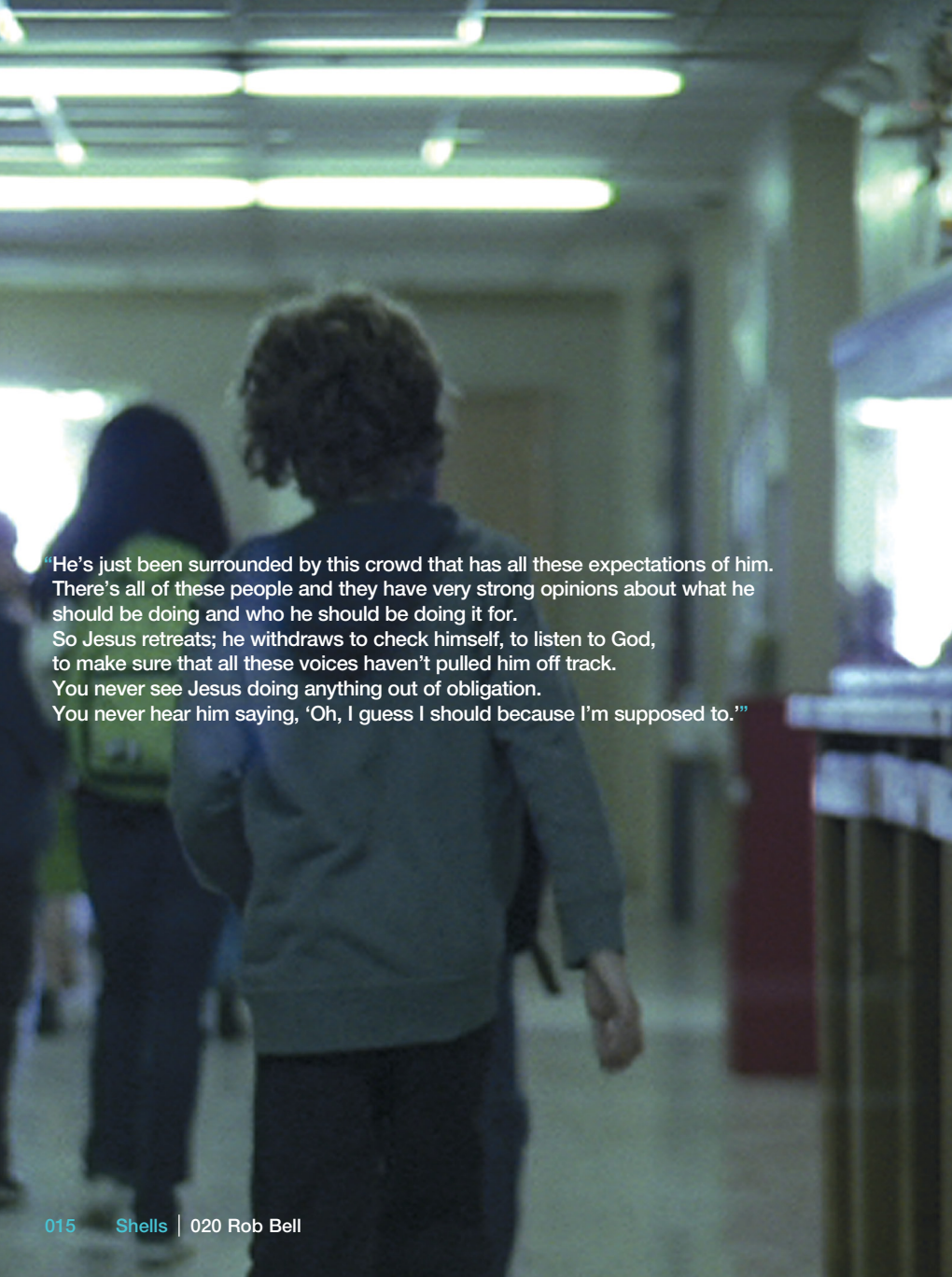
“He has a compass. He has an orientation.  
He has a way to orient his life, a path that he’s on.  
Jesus says no because he’s already said yes.  
He’s very clear on what his life is about.  
Do you have a hard time saying no?  
Or perhaps there’s a better question – what is it that you have said yes to?  
Because you can’t say no until you’ve said yes to something else.”

What is your life about?

How could answering that question help you to be more focused?

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35 (TNIV)



“He’s just been surrounded by this crowd that has all these expectations of him. There’s all of these people and they have very strong opinions about what he should be doing and who he should be doing it for. So Jesus retreats; he withdraws to check himself, to listen to God, to make sure that all these voices haven’t pulled him off track. You never see Jesus doing anything out of obligation. You never hear him saying, ‘Oh, I guess I should because I’m supposed to.’”

How can we avoid letting the expectations of others dictate what we do?

When was the last time you were able to retreat?



“The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard said that a saint is the person who can will the one thing. He was talking about the kind of person who knows exactly what their life is about.”

What does it mean to you to “will the one thing”?  
Do your choices drive you toward the “one thing” in your life?

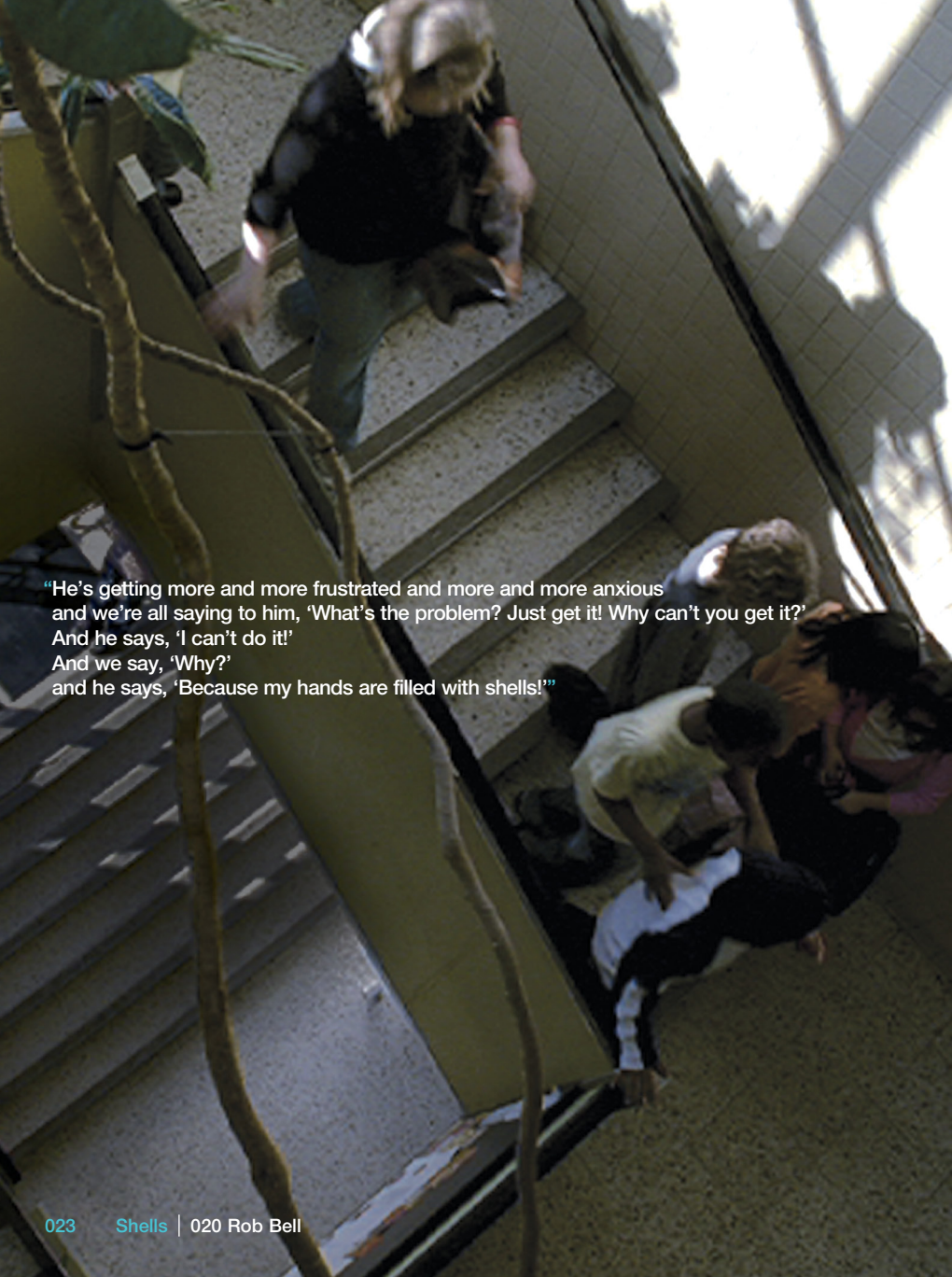
Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise,  
making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.  
Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

—  
Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)



"I heard this guy recently say that he's drowning in good. See the enemy of the best isn't always the worst. Sometimes the enemy of the best is the good. It's when we become so busy doing all these good things that we have no energy left to will the one thing."

Who or what is suffering in your life because you're busy doing so many good things?



"He's getting more and more frustrated and more and more anxious  
and we're all saying to him, 'What's the problem? Just get it! Why can't you get it?'  
And he says, 'I can't do it!'  
And we say, 'Why?'  
and he says, 'Because my hands are filled with shells!'"

What are the shells that keep you from grabbing hold of your starfish?

What would it take to drop them?



"May you drop your shells in the pursuit of a simple, disciplined, focused life in which you pursue the few things God has for you. And may you be like Jesus, able to say no, because you've already said yes."



It has been said that shell collecting is the second most popular collecting hobby, after postage stamps.