

Michael Faircloth

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\$5,000 WINNER

Distribution Center #7034

Smyrna, DE

For years, my life was work, work, work. My wife, Donna, and I have two grown daughters, Shelby and Elizabeth, and my family's my whole world, but I was hardly home. I'm a truck driver and I was away for days at a time — I'd drive up to 2,600 miles a week. My father was a workaholic and I got that from him.

Last September, I discovered a golf ball sized mass on my neck.

I'd put off seeing a doctor and when I finally went to the ER, I was diagnosed with tonsil cancer that had spread to the lymph nodes. There were a million things running through my mind, like, "Am I going to die? How can I take care of my family." I had eight weeks of radiation, then chemotherapy, and my doctors are optimistic that the cancer has gone. We'll know for sure at my next CT scan. But it was a big wake-up call. I'm 58 and I needed balance in my life.

My good friend, Doug Slates, a Thrive Challenge winner, encouraged me to start.

His son committed suicide and it helped him go through his grief. I downloaded the Thrive app and read the inspiring stories.

I started reading the Bible every morning and praying with my wife.

As a family, we listen to Christian music like hymns. "Amazing Grace" is my favorite. It makes me want to be a better person.

I've always worked out and I started exercising again.

After my treatment, I could only walk for five minutes a day. Now I'm walking 30 minutes a day with the family and our puppies. I could only do one push-up to start with and I'm up to seven. And the other day I was strong enough to get out and wax the car! I love the Thrive Microsteps, like taking a minute to acknowledge yourself for showing up when you've exercised.



I'm building my strength with good food.

I have anemia, so I eat lots of spinach. My girls make spaghetti with sausage and mushrooms, or poached eggs for me. I'm at home on disability and we all eat all three meals together.

We're getting tighter as a family and hanging out together.

I'm teaching both girls to drive, which is another chance to bond with them. In the evening, Donna does needlepoint, Shelby and I play scrabble, and I play chess with the girls or on the computer.

The Thrive Challenge has changed me, I've reframed my whole life.

I even see this cancer — as painful as it's been — as a blessing. I'm ready to go back to work, but I won't be working too much anymore. Life's getting better a day at a time and I know everyone probably says this, but I have the world's best family. One of my goals is to live to be 100! My dream: to retire by the beach and take a walk by the ocean with my wife every morning.



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