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\$5,000 WINNER
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My biggest struggle has been my weight. I'm 47, my wife, Vicki, and I have four children: Samuel's 11, Elijah's nine, Noah's six, and Abigail is four. Life got busier and busier, and for convenience, I'd eat fast food and drink soda. I'd have a burst of energy followed by a crash. When I rode my bike with my sons, I'd get winded. I weighed 285 pounds and I had extremely high cholesterol. I didn't want to live like that anymore. I decided to try to improve my health through diet and exercise instead of medication, so I downloaded the Thrive app at the beginning of the year.

My first Microstep was food prepping.

I'd bring my lunch in from home and I literally stopped drinking soda. Another Microstep was making healthy substitutes. Instead of beef fajitas, I make them with chicken. A go-to for us is zucchini noodles with alfredo sauce. I admit that it was hard to give up pasta, but now I prefer veggie noodles. Another favorite meal is roasted salmon, asparagus, and sweet potatoes.

I no longer consume a nightly bowl of ice cream.

For snacks, I have low carb protein bars, nuts, or raw veggies. And when I crave chocolate I'll have 90% dark chocolate. No more empty calories!

Another Microstep was making a choice to move my body.

I started setting up reminders on my smartwatch to walk 250 steps every hour; I gradually increased my movement and now I walk 15,000 steps a day. At home I walk with our boys and we go for bike rides.

At work, I volunteer giving tours and get in my steps at the same time.

People who work for Walmart around the world, like buyers, visit us. It's so interesting meeting them and learning about different cultures.

We limit screen time at home and encourage outdoor time.

We're gardening and growing vegetables like cabbage, peas, broccoli and tomatoes. The children get to decide what vegetables they want to grow, which means they're invested in eating them! Samuel's growing rainbow carrots. We'll pull them up soon and he's excited. Elijah's growing corn and he's started a pollinator garden to attract butterflies. We also bought a chicken coop. We feed the scraps to the chickens and have fresh eggs.

I'm doing a lot of yard work.

I mow a loop through our field and the one next to us, which my wife's parents own, so we have a nice clean field to walk through with no fear of stepping on a snake!



Each of our children chooses a monthly adventure.

We went to Devil's Den State park recently. It has a river flowing through it and a small waterfall. We like to walk the nature trails and look at the trees and animals. We also visited the Museum of Native American History in Bentonville.

Vicki and don't get out on a lot of date nights, but we'll often watch a movie together.

We spend time with each other after we put the kids to bed. And on Wednesday evenings while the kids are at a church club, we eat our supper together and enjoy a conversation that doesn't get interrupted ten times.

We're also connecting with our extended family.

On the fourth Sunday of the month, we have a family dinner for 25 people. I love the sense of community — family is vital to me.

Thrive has helped me take back control of my life.

Recently we went to a Northwest Arkansas Naturals baseball game after church. We stopped to get something to eat and I realized I didn't want fast food. Last year I would have eaten a burger, fries, and a hot fudge sundae. Instead I just bought pecans at the game.

My knees and ankles don't hurt anymore, and I've lost 40 pounds.

I don't have to go on any medication. Here's what my doctor wrote on my portal after my last check up. "Your labs look great! Your cholesterol has come down quite a bit. Your blood sugar/A1C, blood counts, kidney function, liver function and thyroid look great. Keep working hard, you are doing awesome!"

I know I'll have the energy to run and keep up with my kids as they get older.

I was older when I had children, I'll be 62 when my daughter graduates high school, and now I know I'll be here to see my grandkids.



THRIVE