THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN

Intro: Heaven is the goal we are all wishing to attain. Your very presence here demonstrates this truth. Sad to say there are many who do not know how to reach heaven’s home. Thus, this lesson will set forth three basic steps to heaven.

I. OUT OF SELF.
   A. In stepping out of self we must:
      1. Deny self.
         a. Mat. 10:38-39 “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”
         b. Mat. 16:24-25 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”
         c. John 12:24-26 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”
      2. Give up self; 2 Cor. 8:5 “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”
      3. Put off the old man.
         a. Eph. 4:22-24 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”
         b. Col. 3:9-10 “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:”
         c. Rom. 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
      d. This starts at the point of baptism; Rom. 6:4-6 “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”
      4. Forsake all
         a. Mat. 19:27 “Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”
         b. This includes family; Mat. 10:35-37 “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 38And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. 39He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”
         c. This includes the love of the world.
            (1) Jam. 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,”
            (2) 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
B. The one who steps out of self no longer:

1. Trust in self.
   a. Ps. 37:3-5 “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”
   b. Pro. 3:5-7 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”
   c. Pro. 23:4 “Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.”

2. Looks to self.
   a. Jer. 10:23 “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
   b. Pro. 14:12 “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
   c. Heb. 12:1-2 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

3. Wishes to glorify self.
   a. 2 Cor. 5:15 “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”
   b. Mat. 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
   c. 1 Pet. 2:12 “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
   d. John 15:1-8 (esp. vs. 8) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

4. Seeks first the welfare of self; Mat. 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

5. He has died to self.
   a. Rom. 6:6-8, 11 “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
   b. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

C. Many have not been converted, because they were not willing to take this step

1. Rich young ruler; Mat. 19:22 “But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”
2. Chief priests; John 11:47-48 “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.”

3. Felix; Acts 24:25 “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

4. Agrippa; Acts 26:28 “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

II. INTO CHRIST

A. Some things in Christ

1. All Spiritual Blessings; Eph. 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"

2. New Creatures
   a. 2 Cor. 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new:"
   b. We are a child of God; Gal. 3:26 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
   c. This begins our new life with Christ.
      (1) We put off the old man
      (2) We put on the new man created in Christ Jesus.

3. Redemption; forgiveness of sins
   a. Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"
   b. Col. 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

4. No Condemnation; Rom 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

5. Salvation; 2 Tim. 2:10 “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

B. We are baptized into Christ

1. Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

2. Gal. 3:27 “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

3. We are not ready for baptism until we:
   a. have been taught
      (1) Mat. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      (2) John 6:45 “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”
   b. Believe; Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
   c. Repented; Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
   d. Confessed Christ as God’s Son; Acts 8:37 “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
III. INTO GLORY

A. One must die or be transformed to reach heaven
1. Flesh and blood cannot go into heaven.
   a. 1 Cor. 15:50 “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”
   b. Phi. 3:21 “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”
2. To reach heaven one must die in Christ
   a. Rev. 14:13 “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”
   b. Psa. 116:15 “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” cf. 1 Cor. 1:2 “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

B. Must go through the judgment to reach heaven.
1. Rom. 14:10, 12 “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ....12So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
2. 2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”
3. Only those that are righteous shall go into everlasting life; Mat. 25:46 “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Conclusion: Let us follow these simple steps in our lives and in so doing attain that heavenly home.