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Newsletter

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Agape Love: The Mark Of Christian Relationships

Agape love is one of four specific kinds of love described in the Bible. It changes the way we understand God and transforms our relationships with others.

<https://www.lwf.org/keys-to-healthy-relationships/agape-love-christian-relationships>

When you think of love, what comes to mind?

Maybe you think of romantic love, like that between a man and a woman. This is the kind of love our culture is obsessed with, with millions of books and songs and movies dedicated to the subject.

Or maybe you think about the love a parent has for a child. There are few things sweeter than deep

parental love. Or maybe you picture the love that exists between two very close friends.

In the Bible, we find another type of love that we don't often think about: **agape love**.

When we understand the meaning of agape love, it changes the way we understand God and transforms our relationships with others.

What Is Agape Love?

"Agape" is one of four Greek words for love found in the New Testament that is usually translated as "love". Like every word, it has different meanings depending on the context it's used. Sometimes it's used to describe ordinary, human love.

For example, in *Matthew 5:43*, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"

In this instance, Jesus is using the word "agape" to describe worldly love that is only given to people you like. There is

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God.

nothing extraordinary about the love Jesus is describing here. No one is shocked if you love those you like and hate your enemies.

In other cases, however, the Bible uses “*agape*” to describe a very different, supernatural kind of love. In **Romans 5:8** we read, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Here, “*agape*” is used to describe the nature of God’s love toward us. It is a sacrificial, self-giving love. It is love that pursued our good at God’s expense. It is undeserved love poured out on sinners.

Notice that God’s love is not dependent on the recipient. He poured out His abundant love on us even when we were still sinners. He didn’t wait for us to get our lives together. He didn’t tell us to get cleaned up first. No, He sacrificially loved us even when we had absolutely nothing to offer Him.

God’s love is completely different than the world’s love. The world says, “I’ll love you if you are worth loving.” God says, “I love you even when you’re at your worst.” The world says, “I’ll love you if you love me.” God says, “I love you unconditionally.”

We are called to give the same “*agape*” love to others. God’s amazing love has been given to us, and we have the privilege of giving that love to others. In fact, love is supposed to be the defining characteristic of Christian relationships. In **John 13:35**, Jesus said to His disciples, “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

When we sacrificially love others, we are showing the watching world what God is like. This is why love is so very important for Christians. When people look at our lives, they should see

What does it look like when we show “*agape*” love to other Christians? In **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**, we read the following:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

These verses help us understand what Christ-like love actually looks like. Speaking about these verses, pastor Adrian Rogers says that our love should be:

- + Steadfast
- + Serving
- + Sincere
- + Self-effacing
- + Self-restraining
- + Self-denying
- + Serene
- + Sacrificial
- + Sympathetic
- + Suffering

Notice that “*agape*” love isn’t primarily a feeling. Feelings are unreliable, often coming and going very quickly. Christ-like love is primarily an action. Yes, feelings are certainly involved, but they are not the foundation. The foundation of true love is a commitment to the good of the other person.

If you build your relationships on feelings, they won’t survive over the long run. Feelings aren’t enough to keep you going when things get difficult. A stronger, much more sure foundation is needed.

SJBC

HEALTH CORNER



Heart Health is Optimal Health!

Both heart and physical health are two very important components of a healthy life, from childhood to the golden years.

A little progress each day adds up to BIG results! Start with these tips today!

Tips for a Healthy Heart!



Physical Activity
increases heart rate and blood flow for at least 30 minutes daily. **Walk With Ease Program**



Manage Chronic Conditions
such as **high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol.**



Eat a Healthy Diet
high in fruits and vegetables, especially berries and green leafy vegetables. Check out **Heart healthy recipes** and **MyPlate resources** from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Get a Good Night's Sleep for at least 7-8 hours.



Schedule Regular Checkups with your doctor for routine screenings and vaccinations.



Giving Up Tobacco
lowers your risk of developing heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and other smoking-related illnesses.
Need Help Call Quit Now Virginia 1-800-QUIT-NOW | 1-800-784-8669 | 1-855-DEJELLO-YA /1-855-335-3569 –Spanish

**Reduce Alcohol**

Drinking too much can harm your health.



Help Needed!!!

At the 2025 Annual Church Meeting, a couple of vacancies were announced during the Permanent Organization Committee report:

- + Church Clerk
- + House Committee Chair

If you are interested in assisting SJBC by filling these vacancies, please see *Mrs. Mary Ann Corpal-Clay*, Chair of the Permanent Organization Committee.



Who am I?

For bragging rights, a small token, and your picture in the Newsletter, name the club described below. If a tie, everyone wins!!!

Entries are due at the end of services on the 3rd Sunday.

- * Organized in 1953, the same year St. John moved in 640 Vance.
- * First meeting held at the home of the late *Rev. & Mrs. A. McEwen Williams*.
- * 3 Main purposes:
 - * To render helpful services
 - * To enlist members'
 - * To encourage spiritual/cultural development of young people
- * Club Colors: Red & White
- * Flower: Carnation

Member Spotlight

Men's Month 2026

February, at *St. John Baptist Church*, is Men's Month and the 4th Sunday is Men's Day!!! It's a month and a day when the Men of *SJBC* are celebrated.

This year's Chair is *Deacon Eddie Bailey*, Co-Chair is *Deacon Lindsey Day* and the guest speaker is Pastor Stephen Chitman of Second St John Missionary Baptist Church Incorporated, West Memphis, Ark. The theme for Men's Day 2026 is "*New Directions*," Proverbs 3: 5-6.



Activities:

- **11:00 am Service**

Saturday, 15th @ 11:00 AM
Stan Bell, Guest Speaker

- **Men's Month Fellowship Breakfast**

Saturday, 21st @ 9:00 AM
The Farms @ Bailey Station—Collierville
Cost: \$10.00 plus tip
Please RSVP @ 901 351-9684

- **Men's Day**

Sunday, February 22nd @ 11:00 AM
Worship Service followed by a lite reception

Financial Goal:

At least, \$200 per member (man, woman or child) or whatever you can afford.

From Page 2 **Food**

Examples of Agape Love

The greatest example of “agape” love is, of course, God’s love for us. God could have simply told us that He loves us and that would be enough. He’s God, after all. If He says it, it’s true.

But God proved His love for us by sending Jesus to save us from our sins. God took decisive action to show the height, depth, and breadth of His love.

In **John 3:16** it famously says,

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

It cost God a great deal to save us from our sins. He gave up His precious, beloved, only begotten Son so that we could have everlasting life. It’s one thing to say that you love a person. It’s

something else altogether to sacrifice something you deeply love for them.

The hymn “How Deep

The Father’s Love For Us” says:

How deep the Father’s love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure”

We cannot doubt the love of God. The cross demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are deeply, incredibly loved by God.

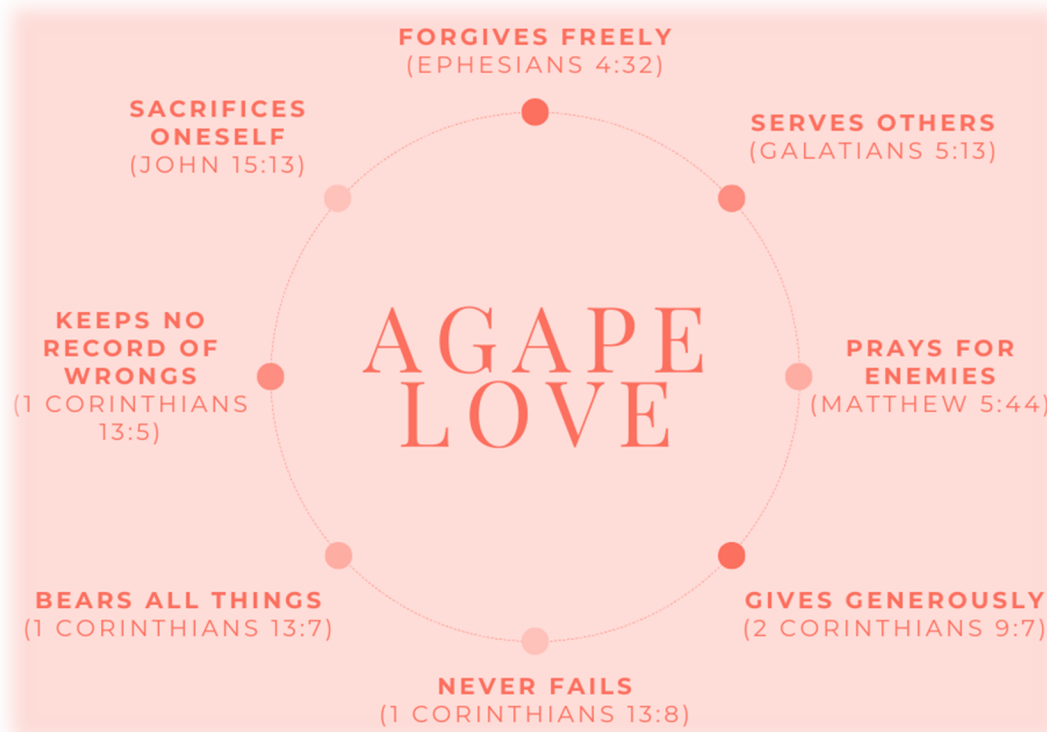
1 John 3:16 puts it this way:

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

The early church was committed to showing the world the incredible love of God that they had received. They cared for orphans and widows when no one else would. They gave to the poor when the rest of society rejected the impoverished. The sick were healed and the lame were made to walk.

The world couldn’t ignore this kind of love. In the face of intense opposition, Christianity spread to all corners of the world. Nothing can

stand before the unstoppable love of God.





IRS Tax Season 2026 Is Here: Big Changes to Know Before You File

Due to several major tax rule changes, your 2025 return might feel unfamiliar even if your income looks the same.

<https://www.kiplinger.com/taxes/big-tax-changes-to-know-before-you-file>

You may have heard that the 2026 tax season, which officially began January 26, is the first to be impacted by President Donald Trump's 2025 tax law, known by some as the "big, beautiful bill."

New tax changes, from revamped credits and one less free filing option to updated 1099-K rules and new schedules for special breaks, could affect whether you owe money or get a tax refund, and how quickly the IRS processes your return.

On that note, the IRS is still implementing the changes and updating systems amid budget and staffing pressures. So be prepared this filing season for longer wait times for phone assistance and potentially slower resolution if your return needs extra review.

The standard deduction for 2025 taxes is bigger

The 2025 Trump tax bill, signed into law on July 4, 2025, makes the lower individual tax brackets from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA, from Trump's first term as president) permanent. That means the seven federal income tax rates remain and range from 10% to 37%.

But for 2025 returns you'll file this tax season, the standard deduction increased to about \$15,750 for single filers, \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly, and \$23,625 for heads of household.

The SALT deduction cap has increased — for now

Speaking of the state and local tax deduction, the "big beautiful bill" raises the SALT cap from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for 2025 returns.

The cap will increase by 1% annually through 2029. Phase-outs begin for households with modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) over \$500,000.

Note: *This expansion is temporary. After 2029, the SALT deduction cap is scheduled to revert to \$10,000.*

The higher cap will likely have the most significant impact on joint filers with high property-tax bills in high-cost housing markets. For many in that group, itemizing could now result in a bigger deduction than claiming the standard deduction.

Child tax credit amount and rules have changed

Taxpayers with children see a modestly higher federal child tax credit (CTC) for 2025, along with some eligibility rule changes.

- For 2025 returns, the maximum child tax credit is \$2,200 per qualifying child under age 17. That's up \$200 from last year and is subject to income limits.
- Up to about \$1,700 of the credit can be refundable for eligible lower-income families through the additional child tax credit, depending on earned income and other requirements.

Income-based phase-outs still apply. For most single filers, the CTC begins to phase out when MAGI exceeds \$200,000. For most married couples filing jointly, it begins to phase out at \$400,000, with the credit shrinking as income rises above those thresholds.

Co-parents should coordinate which parent will claim

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each child for the year to avoid duplicate claims and processing delays.

Older adults over age 65 get a 'senior' bonus deduction

Beginning with the 2025 tax year and running through 2028, individuals age 65 and older may claim an additional \$6,000 deduction on top of their standard or itemized deduction, subject to certain conditions.

This “senior bonus” deduction phase-out starts at modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) of \$75,000 for singles (and \$150,000 for joint filers), and disappears once income exceeds \$175,000 (single) or \$250,000 (joint).

The deduction requires a Social Security number valid for work and is not available to those filing as married filing separately.

There are several new deductions and a Schedule 1-A

The 2025 Trump tax bill also introduces several new “above-the-line” deductions and organizes them on redesigned schedules.

A revamped Schedule 1 now works with a new Schedule 1-A to capture adjustments to income created by the new tax law. That includes the new car-loan interest deduction and targeted tax relief for qualified tip income and overtime pay.

- For 2025 through 2028, individuals may deduct interest paid on a loan used to purchase a “qualified vehicle,” subject to a \$10,000 annual cap and strict requirements, including final assembly in the United States and other eligibility rules.
- This deduction is treated as an adjustment to income, meaning eligible borrowers can benefit even if they don't itemize.

In addition, workers can claim new deductions for certain earnings: up to \$25,000 of qualified tip income (subject to income phaseouts and specific occupation eligibility) and up to \$12,500 of overtime pay for single filers (\$25,000 for joint filers), subject

to income limits and qualifying work definitions.

These overtime pay and tip income amounts are generally claimed through the new schedules rather than directly on Form 1040, and they depend on accurate employer reporting of wages and tip income.

IRS Direct File is gone for 2026

After piloting a free Direct File tool in limited states for the past two filing seasons, the IRS is not offering Direct File for the 2026 tax season.

Taxpayers seeking free filing options must instead rely on IRS Free File (if eligible), commercial software (some exceptions may mean filing isn't free), volunteer tax-prep programs such as VITA and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), or paper forms (IRS Free Fillable Forms) to file 2025 federal tax returns.

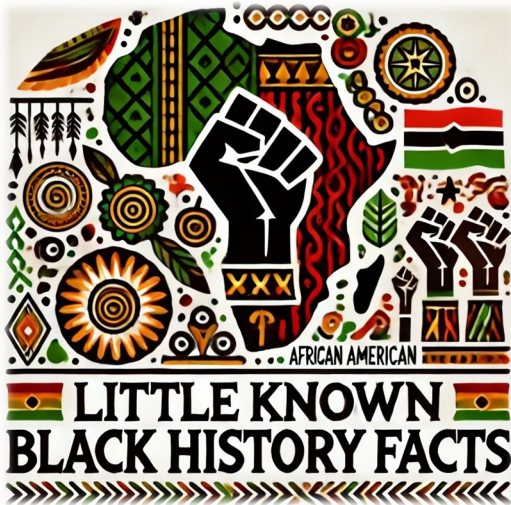
2026 tax season changes: How to get ready before you file taxes

Given this mix of higher and new deductions, new schedules, and reworked rules, it makes sense to treat this filing season as more of a reevaluation rather than an automatic replay of last year.

- Check your withholding or estimated tax payments against the new tax brackets and deductions, gather any 1099-K and new-account forms, and confirm that you're eligible to use your desired filing method.
- As mentioned, because the IRS is rolling out these changes while managing budget and staffing cuts, taxpayers should anticipate longer phone wait times and slower processing for returns that need human review.

The IRS advises not waiting until the last minute to file, responding promptly to legitimate IRS letters (beware of tax scams), and using online tools where possible can also help reduce friction and improve the odds of a timely refund, if you're due one.

For more information and links to more explanations, please visit <https://www.kiplinger.com/taxes/big-tax-changes-to-know-before-you-file>



ALICE COACHMAN 1923-2014

Alice Coachman was the very first african american woman to win a Gold medal in the olympics!

~ DAVID E. TAYLOR ~



*High Jump at the 1948 Olympic Games
in London*

Mabel Keaton Staupers

- Mabel Keaton Staupers was born in Barbados, West Indies, in 1890. In 1917 she graduated from Freedmen's Hospital School of Nursing in Washington, D.C. and went on to work as a private duty nurse in New York. Staupers helped black women nurses get into the mainstream of American nursing.
- She also helped to integrate black nurses into the Armed Forces and the American Nurses Association.
- From 1934 to 1946 Mabel Keaton Staupers was executive secretary of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, NACGN.
- She organized the Booker T. Washington Sanatorium, which became the first medical facility in the Harlem area where black doctors could treat their patients. For twelve years she was the executive secretary of the Harlem Committee of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association.
- In 1951 Staupers was the recipient of the Springarn Medal, an award for the outstanding woman leader of the century.




Major General Frederick Davison, the country's first black Field Brigade Commander, officiating at an awards ceremony at Fire Base "Stephanie." Spring-Summer 1969.



Malvin "Mal" Goode hired by ABC Television, in 1962, as their first Black network news correspondent.

February 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Sunday Services	2	3	4	5 <i>Markee Mangum</i>	6	7 <i>Deacons' Meeting Official Board Mtg</i>
8 Sunday Services Sunday School 10am	9	10 Prayer Mtg/ Bible Study <i>Markee Mangum</i>	11	12 <i>Betty Nelson Alicia James</i>	13	14 
15 Sunday Services <i>Call Meeting</i>	16 	17 Prayer Mtg/ Bible Study	18	19	20 <i>Bobbie Gilliam</i>	21
22 Sunday Services Sunday School 10am <i>Floyd Rogers</i>	23	24 Prayer Mtg/ Bible Study	25 <i>Ronald Clark</i>	26 <i>Dr. Gloria Pryor Lewis</i>	27	28

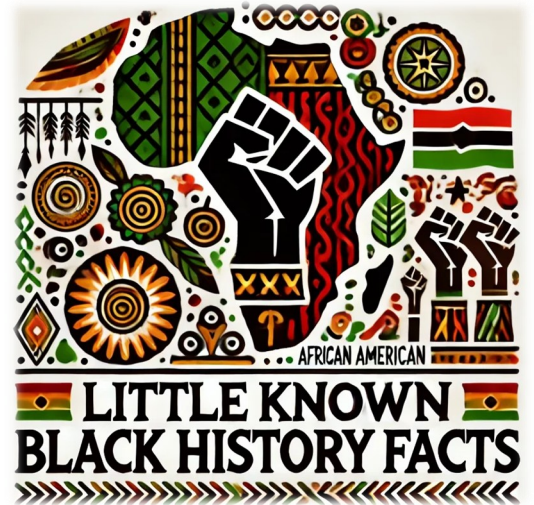
Feb 14 - Valentine's Day

Feb 16 - Presidents' Day

From Page 8 **FACTS**



Lt. Commander John W. Lee Jr. was the first Black commissioned Navy officer, achieving the historic feat on this day in 1947. The late Navy man made it his personal mission to aid other qualified Black servicemen in his branch to get the same opportunities he did.



Dr. Selma Hortense Burke was an American sculptor and a member of the Harlem Renaissance movement. She made magnificent moves as a Black woman in an era where women—especially those of color—didn't have many opportunities. In fact, what Dr. Burke is best known for, a bas relief portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt that inspired the profile found on the obverse of the dime, wasn't always credited to her. The initials "JS" situated on the small coin are the initials of former U.S. Mint's Chief Engraver, John Sinnock, who took undue credit for the design. In a 1994 interview with journalist Steven Litt, Dr. Burke said, "This has happened to so many black people," adding, "I have never stopped fighting this man and have never had anyone who cared enough to give me credit."



Rebecca Lee Crumpler

February 18, 1831 – March 4, 1895

Rebecca Lee Crumpler was the first female African-American physician in the United States. She attended the New England Female Medical College of which she was their only African-American graduate in 1864.

In 1883, Crumpler published "A Book of Medical Discourses" to advise women on health care for themselves and their children. There are copies in the National Library of Medicine in Washington, D.C., and at Countway Medical Library at Harvard University Medical School.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER
IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION



February



AFFECTION
 BONBONS
 BOUQUET
 BRAVE
 CANDLEMAS
 CANDY
 CARD
 CHAMPIONSHIP
 CHOCOLATE
 COLD
 CUPID
 DOILY
 EMERGE
 EQUALITY
 FEBRUARY
 FOOTBALL
 FORECAST
 FOURTEENTH
 FREEDOM
 FRIENDS
 GLITTER
 GROUNDHOG
 HEALTH
 HEART
 HEARTBEAT
 HIBERNATE
 HISTORY
 HUG
 IMBOLC
 JEWELRY
 JUSTICE
 KINDNESS
 KISS
 LEAP
 LINCOLN
 LOVE
 LOVEBIRDS
 MESSAGE
 MYTHOLOGY
 PEACE
 PINK
 PREDICT
 PRESIDENTS
 RED
 RIGHTS
 RING
 ROMANCE



P	Q	T	K	G	R	C	Y	N	W	C	A	N	D	L	E	M	A	S	P	S	C	W
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ROSE
 SAINT
 SECOND
 SHADOW
 SKIING
 SLEDDING
 SMILE
 SNOW
 TEDDY

TWENTY EIGHT
 TWENTY NINE
 VALENTINE
 WARMING
 WASHINGTON
 WEATHER
 WELLNESS
 WINTER
 WOODCHUCK



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