

LOVE PERIOD.

WITH REV. DR.
JACQUI LEWIS

The Transformative Power of Love
with Tiq Milan

Jacqui Lewis: Hey everyone. I'm Jacqui Lewis and I am the host of Love Period, a podcast produced by the Center for Action and Contemplation. This is our fourth season, and in this one we're thinking about how to reframe and reclaim Christian as a religion of love, as the religion of Rabbi Jesus. What about if we took it back to Jesus and took it back to love? What if we take it back to scripture that elucidates this beautiful movement of love and justice? Join us this season for beautiful conversations with folks across the spectrum to talk about what's love got to do with scripture and what's scripture got to do with love.

Today my guest is Tiq Milan. Now, Tiq is a member of our community and sometimes I think wow, the people who belong to Middle Church. He's a media maker, a journalist, an advisor, and an advocate in the LGBT community, a trans man whose voice really opens my heart. I think he'll open yours as well. I'm so glad you're here today. Thank you, Tiq.

Tiq Milan: Yes, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here with you today.

Jacqui Lewis: How are you doing?

Tiq Milan: I'm good. I'm hanging in there. I'm doing the best as I can these days, so no complaints really too much.

Jacqui Lewis: You and I know that though Love Period is the central message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, right. Love God, love neighbor, love self.

Tiq Milan: That's right.

Jacqui Lewis: Love Period. You even told me you have that tattooed on your chest.

Tiq Milan: Yes, I do.

Jacqui Lewis: Love and period.

Tiq Milan: Love with a period at the end. Yeah, I got that about 15 years ago.

Jacqui Lewis: What has happened, Tiq, such that your lived experience as a trans person, as a trans man is like first of all anybody's business? And secondly, why have we lost our flipping minds around sexuality and gender in the church? Honey, let's just talk straight up about that. What is that?

Tiq Milan: That's a good question, and I'm trying to figure that out too, because the message of Christ and the message of Christianity is just love, right? That's what God and Jesus wants from us, is to live our life full of love and to be our best selves.

Jacqui Lewis: Right, exactly.

Tiq Milan: God gives us the space and the pathways to become our best selves, and I think that me being trans is a part of God's gift to me. It's me being my best self.

Jacqui Lewis: It's you journeying fully to you, right?

Tiq Milan: Fully to us, right. And God gives that to everybody. God does. And when we get out of the

religious part of it, right? Growing up, my father used to tell me to read the Bible, not as a Christian, but just as a human being. He said, I want you to read these words as a human, and you take from it what works for you. And what doesn't work for you, doesn't work for you. And one thing that I understood when I started to understand the text of God, the real spiritual essence of it, that it's all about how we can become our best and our most authentic selves. And I think that that journey that so many trans people are on, it's a journey for everybody, for cisgender people, for straight people. We all have a journey of gender. We all should have some intentionality towards what kind of human being we're going to be in the world.

Trans people have been intentional about our humanity, and I think people who are really stuck in the religious, in the religion, the religiosity of a thing, but not necessarily the spirituality of this life, see us defining ourselves for ourselves and says, no, no, no, no, no. You can't do that because you are defined by something different. You're defined by God. Yeah, but that definition is one of having the openness and the expansiveness to be your best self. A part of that definition is saying that you have the will to be this beautiful, glorious person, and guess what? I made you into this beautiful, glorious person, but how you get there is on you. And people don't understand that.

So here we are being the most beautiful, most glorious, most authentic, most loving selves. And it looks like something that they could never do, that they can never be because your religion says X, Y, Z. So that's what I think it is. I think people just have the idea of God screwed up. I don't believe in a God that is all full of vengeful and judgment. I think of God as just love.

Jacqui Lewis: God is just love.

Tiq Milan: Just love. That's it.

Jacqui Lewis: The double entendre of that God as just love, only love, but also just just love.

Tiq Milan: Just love.

Jacqui Lewis: Right? Just love, yeah. That's Middle's little moniker on our website. Just love and love period are the two phrases that we've claimed. Tiq, I'm going to try to say to simplify and also to make more complex the faith that we're called to be. If we're called to love, to only love, love being like the non-possessive delight in the unique particularity of the other, right? The non-possessive delight in the unique particularity of the other. If I love you Tiq, and I love you, I want you to be fully you, authentically you, completely you. And I understand that God intends that for you as well as me. And you were saying a bit ago all of us are on a journey. I hope you take it the way I mean it. All of us are on a journey to our most complete full self, right?

Tiq Milan: That's right.

Jacqui Lewis: Straight people are on that journey.

Tiq Milan: That's right.

Jacqui Lewis: Queer people are on that journey. Trans people are on that journey. Is the church afraid, some parts of the church just afraid of the sexual part of our journey period the gender part of our journey, period? Is that what it is?

Tiq Milan: I think so. When we think about gender as a social construct that it is, I think that the binary nature of gender is the social construct. But the fact that there is a variety of genders is something that is real. But the reason that we have this binary system is as a way of creating an imbalance of power in the church. The church gleans power from that imbalance, from the patriarchy, from the gender imbalances. That is a part of what it means to be a part of a church, to be a church, and for a lot of different churches. So I think that this idea of kind of chipping away at this patriarchal structure and chipping away at this binary system is starting to chip away at the power of the church.

But some people equate to the power of God, but it's not. It's two different things. And I think, isn't it in the Bible? Doesn't Jesus say something like it says don't worship me, but worship the word. Something to the effect it's not about the church, it's about the words that's coming out of my mouth. It's about the things that we're saying. So I think that there's a place where this idea where we are getting away from this binary nature of gender and really talking expressively and openly about sex is giving more power to the divinity of the human being instead of giving more power into the social structures of the church.

Jacqui Lewis: Amen. That's a whole word. That's a whole word. We think about, y'all who are listening, who will write me nasty notes if I just don't call God a he. If I call God she, I can step into all manners of mess. Because in fact, that pronoun he is in the Bible, and that don't mess it up. There's a reason. No, people, the reason that it's written as he is because the men wrote it as he.

Tiq Milan: That's right. Exactly.

Jacqui Lewis: And they wrote it as he not even paying attention to their learnedness, right? Tiq, the word for Holy Spirit in Greek is pneuma. Pneuma, like we get pneumonia from breath, right? Pneuma. And the word for spirit in the Hebrew is ruach. And the Arabic is close to that. And all those words are, guess what? Feminine words. Feminine words like Sophia, wisdom is a feminine word. So this kind of power grab to even dismantle what's feminine in the, so-called Trinity, and I'm saying, so-called Trinity because none of us is there to see all the things, but the feminine nature that's built into the Trinity, as soon as you get a colonized church, which is soon as Rome makes it, the state religion, right?

Constantine, the papacy, the Pope, the Father, the Peter is the founder. And upon this rock I'll build this church. And these women, these female identified folks, these gender folks, these girls can't even talk in church in some churches because the power, as you said so clearly of the maleness cannot be disrupted with some girl stuff, some woman stuff.

Tiq Milan: This is a part of the reason why we're having this clash around language. People don't

want the pronouns. And people call us... What they call it, the alphabet mafia, the LGBTQ ABC. You know what I'm saying? We're constantly expanding. And we're making up words. But first off, all words are made up. And even in the Bible says in the beginning was the word and word is God. So the words that we speak hold so much power, the language that we speak and that we breathe and that we ingest. So this power of language, we see that in the Bible. We see that with people not wanting to refer to God as anything but he because we understand that the word is what creates truth and what creates life.

And so if we start to expand this language to start to understand God and the spirit of this universe as something other than masculine, other than male, where we're giving power to something other than that, it all gets down to that. And that's the thing about patriarchy that's kind of infused into everything that we do. It's a detriment to everybody involved. It really is.

Jacqui Lewis: I think it's right. I just lost my dad as we record this. He died about four weeks ago. And I think about a couple of the comments my brothers made in the place where we were honoring dad at his funeral. And they said, "Dad taught us men don't cry." And truly he said that, but he also would cry at the drop of a hat like if you didn't send his birthday card on time, if you bought him some present he thought you hadn't spent some time on. He was a very tender, sensitive person, but also kind of passing along to his boys, his sons would have been passed along to him, Tiq. So there's a way in which, and I want to be particular about Black culture because you and I are both Black, today African-American culture, that we have also in many ways drunk the Kool-Aid of the patriarchy.

Tiq Milan: Oh, my God, yes.

Jacqui Lewis: And that just makes me want to cry because if you're in West Africa, if you're in Africa, the gender conversations are different than here. Talk to me about, if you don't mind, love, if you don't mind being particular about your experience. I mean, you are just lovely. You are so gifted and thoughtful and bright and gorgeous, by the way, also, just to let y'all know. You can't see it on a podcast. But Tiq, do you feel comfortable at all talking a bit about your journey, your trans journey and how you knew and how you got to this place where you're sitting in all your beautiful realness?

Tiq Milan: Yeah, yeah, sure. So I mean, where to start? Well, first I think it's important for people to know that the journey of being a trans person isn't a monolithic experience. It looks different for everybody. I didn't know that I was trans when I was a kid. I'm in my forties now. I didn't start my medical transition until I was in my twenties. But I do remember when I was seven years old, my mother had bought me a strawberry shortcake bicycle. And it had the pink banana seat and apples and strawberry stickers all over it. And I didn't know that I was transgender, but I looked at that bike and I knew there wasn't a chance in hell I was riding it.

Jacqui Lewis: You were not getting on the peace bike.

Tiq Milan: I said, I don't know. But I ain't riding this bike nowhere in this neighborhood. So

I told my dad. My dad took it back. And he got me the mongoose, the black mongoose with orange racing stripes on it and the lightning bolts, and it had the bar across like the boy bikes. So for me growing up, I was always a masculine little girl and a tomboy. And my parents never really, they never forced it. My mother would buy me a doll. My dad was like, "She's just going to throw a football at it. I don't even know why you do this."

Jacqui Lewis: Why waste the money.

Tiq Milan: Let's just get this child what this child wants. So growing up, I did not have the language or an understanding of trans-ness, growing up in a Black working class household. My mother was a nurse, my dad was a mechanic. That wasn't nothing in the eighties and nineties. That wasn't even a thing. That wasn't a part of our world. What was a part of our world was acceptance. My parents didn't force me to look any kind of way or to do any kind of thing. They never got on me about the fact that I just liked transformers and video games. And I wanted to play football with the boys. They didn't. They just let me be me.

Jacqui Lewis: They let you be you. Let's underscore that.

Tiq Milan: Yeah.

Jacqui Lewis: That's a gift. Wow.

Tiq Milan: It really is. And also I think a part of it is that I didn't grow up in a very religious household. I really didn't. We grew up Seventh Day Adventist, but my grandmother died of breast cancer when I was seven. And they caught the cancer early enough for her to have surgery. She decided that God was going to heal her.

Jacqui Lewis: Oh, no.

Tiq Milan: And did not have no surgery, and she died. And after that, my mother told us, she said, "We don't ever have to step foot in a church if you don't want to." My mother was just over church after that.

Jacqui Lewis: Oh, my goodness. When mom died, yeah.

Tiq Milan: So I didn't grow up in a really religious household. My father's a very spiritual man. He's read the Bible, the Quran, the Dead Sea Scrolls. He's that kind of guy, but not very Christian, not very religious. So I think that that helped raise me into a family of acceptance. So growing up, I really did have that foundation. And I think also another thing that allowed me to be my trans self is that when I came out to my dad as gay when I was a teenager, one of the things that my father said to me that I carry with me to this day is he said, "It's not my job to teach you who you are. You are going to teach me who you are. I'm going to tell you how to be in this world. I'm going to teach you how to be strong and to be a person of integrity and to be honest and have confidence. That's what I'm going to teach you, but you're going to tell me who you are."

So I was given a foundation that when we love you, there is no, but after that. We are going to love you regardless. So that set a really strong foundation of acceptance and expansiveness for me to start to try to understand myself as a masculine person. And then when I moved

here to New York City, about 21 years ago, I met this trans guy. And when I met him, I didn't know he was trans. And he told me, and it was like a light bulb. And I was like, "Holy, this is what it is. This is who I am." So it was like that model of possibility that really let me know. And then that's when I started my medical transition, my medical legal transition here in New York, and then eventually came out to my family. And the rest is history. It's been a really great, great journey. I really have to say that.

Jacqui Lewis: I am so glad for your parents. I'm so glad for a container, an environment of acceptance. I wish that for more families. Thinking about movie, *For The Bible Tells Me So*. And the follow-up to that, I can't remember exactly the name of that title, but where these queer children growing up in churchy families, not all the churchy families, but growing up in these churchy families where there's so much judgment and so much hatred that the kids are suicidal. They run away or they jump off buildings, and they would rather die than to live in a world where they can't be true to themselves.

Tiq Milan: And where they can't be loved. And that's why love is so important. Part of my career, at the beginning of my career, I worked with youth for many, many years, LGBT youth. And let me tell you, Rev, the kids that were the worst off, the ones who were making the worst decisions, the ones who were homeless on drugs, the one who was suffering from mental health issues were the ones who lacked love. They were the kids who were judged, who were ostracized by their parents, who were belittled, who were abused by their parents or by their loved ones because they were queer. So I can't emphasize enough, even though love is this thing that we may not necessarily understand, or sometimes people feel it's corny or it's cliché, but it's real.

Jacqui Lewis: It is real.

Tiq Milan: It's a thing that can save people's lives. And if I didn't have the family that I had, literally, I would not be here. Not the version of the self that you see now, not this really thriving, successful, happy version of a trans man you see today. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the love of my family. And I try to emphasize that to people enough. If there's nothing else you do, but love that queer kid that's in your family, that trans kid, that "black sheep". Somebody love on that person because that love that you give them could save their lives. I saw it day in and day out. That's what saved a lot of those young queer kids, even the ones who were from families with drug addicts and they didn't have a lot of money, but if they had love, they were all right. They were still okay. Those kids turned out to be okay.

Jacqui Lewis: If we have love, if we only have love. Tiq, that is everything.

Tiq Milan: The thing is that love is something that we all got to give.

Jacqui Lewis: That's right.

Tiq Milan: We all got it to give. And it costs you nothing.

Jacqui Lewis: It's free.

Tiq Milan: It's free.

Jacqui Lewis: I am thinking about all the ways that too many parts of the church, and I'm a professional Christian since I'm a preacher universalist though, right? Always, definitely, there's more than one path to God. All paths lead to love.

Tiq Milan: Yes.

Jacqui Lewis: I don't fully understand, especially when we're thinking about texts, one of the most important scriptures in all of the scripture is God is love. This is first John, for the people who like to look up scriptures, God is love. And those who live in love live in God. And God lives in them. This is my North star. God is love.

This is written by the Johannine community. We don't know if it was really John, but this community was trafficking in love. What does it mean? Love, love God, love neighbor, love self. If you love, God lives in you. That's what it says, Tiq. If you love, when you love, everywhere the love is, God is. Now, out in the world of Christian White nationalist crap right now, everybody's a target of hate from this kind of Christianity. Not just trans folks, not just queer folks, Black folks, Latinx folks, immigrant folks, Jewish folks, women.

Tiq Milan: Everybody.

Jacqui Lewis: I would say anybody who's pregnant and doesn't think they should keep the pregnancy. How so much hate in the name of God, how so much hate in the name of God. How did this happen? I mean, what do you think?

Tiq Milan: I think about that all the time. And there's ways because I was having conversations with people on Twitter about this. And there was this young man he was talking about he was a warrior for God. And I'm looking at his face. He had tears. He was serious.

This man was serious. He's like, "God is a warrior and God is the military. And so I'm of God." And so I'm like, where is this coming from? And so people were seeing that there's a ways in which people interpret the text, something in the Bible where people are looking at God as a warrior, as someone who is fighting against. So I think that's the framing that people have. That not that God is love, but that God is of war, that God is about just that God is angry. And that you're making God angry because of these little pieces that I don't want to cherry-pick here and there, but not looking at the overarching idea of text in the scriptures, particularly the words of Jesus Christ is that of love and acceptance. So people are going to bypass that passage in John to go towards the passage where they talk about God who is vengeful or smite me down, whatever.

Jacqui Lewis: The smiting God.

Tiq Milan: Yeah, the smiting God. I'm getting all kinds of smiting thrown at me.

Jacqui Lewis: There's all kind of smittings. Whereas theology is kind of like a living language. I mean, when I was a younger Christian, I used to say, "I'm looking for a grownup God." And what I meant by that is I want to get out of the binary. God, you're good, you're bad. You're going to hell, you're going to heaven. I'm going to spank you. I'm going to beat your tail. That's the kind of concrete thinking that children have, right? It's yes no, good bad, angels devils. So I was thinking maybe if we get a grownup God, we could have some nuance and some.

But in a way, Tiq, now, I think I would say actually, I'm looking for a regressed God. I'm looking for the simplicity of I love you. You are mine. Let's go. I love you. I made you. I love all the people, and we are going to make a healed world together. To me, that's actually regressed, if you will, back to the

simple beginning of time where we think a God of love created the universe out of love, in love to be a partner to that God in the universe. I'm for that now. I'm for what's the simplest text that explains my faith? Love.

Tiq Milan: But I think for some people, a simplified God really makes their bigotry more complex. And that's the thing. People use God as a way of simplifying their bigotry. Like yeah, I don't like gays, I don't like Black people, I don't think that women should have equal rights. And I could do it because it says here in the text, X, Y, Z. But if we said, no, God is just love, well then now they have to really sit with their own bigotry. Now they have to sit with that, and start to understand this isn't coming from something that is okay with you by your God. This is something that is more of a reflection of your own insecurities and your own shortcomings than it is about these people that you so-called hate. People are ready to sit there and really do that work because when you understand God is something simple as love, then that means it means you have to sit with the complexity of your humanity.

The simplified version of our divinity is that we have a core of love. And if we live and we let that and we live in that core, it makes our lives better. Let me tell you, as a queer trans person, I tell people this all the time where I've just rejoined the church. I joined your church a few years ago, been away from the church for a long time as a spiritual man. But what I also understand is that my trans-ness and my queerness makes me closer to God. It is my gift. It's been a gift to me. I've come to the best version of myself. I feel more confident. I feel more beautiful. I feel smart. I feel present in this life because I get to be the man that I need to be. And that's because I'm trans. And my queerness has brought me to a place where I can start to define myself for myself.

When I got to start my community, just a clear latency and say, what does my gender and my community look like that's tethered to my spirit? And it's not connected to what everybody thinks I'm supposed to be. What I'm supposed to be. And that's the thing. A lot of people, they need something else to define themselves. So maybe they need their Christianity. Maybe they need all of these ideas about... I think about masculinity all the time, being a man and masculine in the world. The blueprints that I've gotten is that you are a man, you're masculine because of everything that you can possess of those that you think you're better than, of who you compete against, of you think you have dominion over. So you're only a man in relationship to other things. But as a trans and queer man, I say, I don't want none of that. How do I define me for me? That is God's gift. To me. That's a gift.

And I think that we all need to. You don't have to be a trans person, you don't have to be a queer person to really dive into the gift that God gave you, which is the gift of exploring and intentionality around your humanity. That ain't nothing but God working.

Jacqui Lewis: Tiq, you're going to come to church and preach that. We just wrote you a note that's not yet in your box, but trans awareness, come on and say those words. What a beautiful thing to say that your particular queer trans man journey is a gift. But then also all of ours, all of our becoming human, all of our becoming human is a gift from God, an opportunity to be close to God, to be revealed in God, to revel in God, to have God revealed God's self to us.

Tiq Milan: And people think that they're doing that by saying, like you said, being this human being brings you closer to God. But people look at the text and say, "Well, God says I have to be this, this, and this. So I have to be this type of human being." Even though this have to be kind of human being is antithetical to how they feel, something is not steady. There's a mis-congruence deep in their spirit, because this how they're supposed to be isn't necessarily lined up with who they actually are. And they don't step outside of these little boxes that they think that God in the Bible had put forth for

them to really explore their humanity. But when you break out of that, that's where you really get closer to God and away from the religion of it.

Jacqui Lewis: True religion is binding ourselves to our most authentic self.

Tiq Milan: Exactly.

Jacqui Lewis: Right. Yeah. Oh, that's beautiful.

Tiq Milan: I think queerness is a blueprint for a better future because what queer people and trans people have had to do is had to bind ourselves to our best, to the most authentic version of ourself, even in the face of losing everybody in the world that we thought loved us. We all had to do that. That is a journey. That's the spirit working in you.

Jacqui Lewis: I feel it too. When I'm in a room, in our conference last year, I got into a little bit of trouble. I was trying to be helpful, but I think I stepped a little bit in some stuff. I'm human, I can't help it. But I was sitting on the stage talking to Frederick Joseph, who I just love him so much. He's amazing. And another one of our colleagues, Nadia Bolts Weber, so that was an interesting panel mashup but we were sitting there. And I think Frederick said something like talking about queer and journeys and said something like, "I always feel the maleness of you, Jacqui." And I said, "I'm so glad you do." Because it's in there. And I'm like, woo. Look at you perception. And what I meant, y'all who are listening, isn't that I'm trans, but I meant in that Greek anima animus, the male femaleness, clearly to me as a child growing up, I felt like I was being taught to be my mother's daughter and taught to be one of my father's sons.

Tiq Milan: Interesting.

Jacqui Lewis: Interesting, right?

Tiq Milan: How?

Jacqui Lewis: Well, the mom thing, obviously I'm the oldest girl, oldest child for a long time. We had a half brother come live with us later. But as the oldest girl, you're cooking, you're baking, you're watching the kiddos, you're doing these traditionally feminine roles. But before our half brother came, I was the oldest boy in a way. So I was also being taught how to use a screwdriver and how to change a tire and how to play football. I played football when I was at Northwestern. I played flag ball, and my father would bring my brothers to watch me play football. I was being taught I had to shoot hoops.

So there's a way in which my dad was sort of making his legacy in me as well. Does that make sense? So to wrap that crazy story up just a little bit, now we're at my dad's dying time. He died of ALS, and it was really rough. And a couple of my younger brothers and I were really doing a lot of work together. Me from here, them from there. And a couple of conversations we had where maybe I tease them. I say some manly type stuff in quotes, "You about to go home and get some medicine, aren't you? From your woman?" Or whatever.

And they would take that and say back to me, "You've always been an honorary boy in the family."

Tiq Milan: Interesting.

Jacqui Lewis: Tiq.

Tiq Milan: Interesting.

Jacqui Lewis: So what has happened to me at my age, 60 something, I really do feel comfortable with my feminine energy and my male energy. It's here. There's no reason to pretend like it's not here. And it's not just superficial like did you like the football game or that? I'm saying it's deep inside my soul is an inner dad and an inner mom. Does that make sense to you?

Tiq Milan: Yeah. And I definitely have that too. And I think that there's a time in my life, now this big age of 40 something, what they say, you have less Fs to give as you get older.

Jacqui Lewis: Absolutely less Fs.

Tiq Milan: Definitely less Fs. And I realized that I don't fight against that feminine energy that I have, or maybe that feminine urge or whatever that is, I just let it flow because I know that that's a part. It is a part of my masculinity. It's a part of my manhood, that feminine part that flows through me. And the thing is that, okay, so let me just backtrack.

So as a trans person, one of the hardest parts about transitioning was the social part. The medical part was easy living in New York, get some hormones, easy. Changed my name, easy. Dealing with my family. I was blessed. It was fairly easy. I always say that my trans story is a love story. It's not a story of a bunch of resilience and abandonment. It's not that at all. But the challenge I had was what does it mean to be a man in the world? Socially, what does that look like? So I'm always looking at these blueprints. And I was looking at blueprints from straight heterosexual men and the blueprints they were giving me for masculinity, I was like, this is awful. This is crap.

Jacqui Lewis: I'm not doing that.

Tiq Milan: I'm not doing that. Because a lot of it was underlined was just running away from that feminine energy that you have and doing anything that you can to beat that out of you or let somebody else beat it out of you. And I said, this is me drinking the Kool-Aid because I came out when I was 14. I came out as a lesbian. I was 14. I came out as trans when I was 24. I'm in my forties now. I've spent basically my whole life in a queer community. And I said, actually, these are where the blueprints are. These are the blueprints of really solid masculinity that I could get from the butch women that I know, the gay men that I know.

And all within those versions of masculinity, there was a undercurrent of femininity that wasn't necessarily tried to knock back, but it was one that we allowed to kind of just to run with the masculinity kind of in tandem like this. So I had to start. A light bulb came off and I said, "I'm doing all this talking around blueprints and around being a good man, and here I am. I'm not taking my own advice." So I had to really start to look at queer community and see how masculinity and femininity flowed and how it sometimes came together and say, that's okay. And to allow it to show up in my life however it shows up because nobody can. Because again, my masculinity belongs to me. Can nobody take it away from me? I don't believe in this idea of being emasculated. What does that even mean? How?

Jacqui Lewis: How can someone?

Tiq Milan: How can you take it from me?

Jacqui Lewis: I'm so on fire with this conversation, I'm like, oh, this is so good. Yeah, letting it flow through you, letting the energies that are you flow through you, run alongside you, be a part of you, own them, claim them. I think people are afraid, Tiq. If you're being taught that girls are stinky and shouldn't talk and they bleed and blah, blah, blah, and then suddenly you're feeling some feminineness in yourself and you've been taught to hate it, then you hate yourself. Right? But if you just can love all the pieces and parts. Psalm 139, I was having a bad time when I was about 20, 25 or so and just break up relationship and living in California and having wild life and drinking too much and just like a wilding time. A wilding time in the wilderness, I could say.

And my boss was a Christian and told me that I needed to read the Bible more. And I was like, "Okay, sure, but what?" And first thing he said was Psalm 139. So Tiq, Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know my lying down and my rising up. These are just some pieces of it. Before I speak, you know what's on my tongue. Is there any place I can go from your spirit? If I make my bed in heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in hell, you're there. If I say I'm going to run to the far end of the earth, even there your right hand will claim me. And then this place of being fearfully and awesomely made, I praise you that I'm fearfully and awesomely made. I want to just wrap by saying, you are so damn fearfully and wonderfully made.

Tiq Milan: Thank you so.

Jacqui Lewis: I just am so glad you're a part of my community.

Tiq Milan: Yes, me too.

Jacqui Lewis: I'm so glad for this conversation. And I want to do more together to help other people to find their joy and find their way.

Tiq Milan: Yes. Yes, we should. We should.

Jacqui Lewis: Thank you, Tiq.

Tiq Milan: Thank you. Thank you so much. This was a great conversation and I appreciate everything you do, and I appreciate having you as my pastor at my church. You've really been instrumental in bringing me closer to God and closer to the church and kind of back into a place that feels good and familiar. And it was because of you. My cousin Olive brought me to Homecoming, and that was it.

Jacqui Lewis: Where is Olive? I have not seen that girl singing in a minute.

Tiq Milan: I know. She's still around. She's still around. Yeah. She's far out in Brooklyn. She moved far out in Brooklyn, but she's around.

Jacqui Lewis: I'm going to stalk her. I stalk people. You tell her, hey. Okay.

Tiq Milan: No, I will.

Jacqui Lewis: Thank you, Tiq. Tiq Milan, everybody.

Tiq Milan: Yes. Thank you.

Jacqui Lewis: I hope you enjoyed this episode of Love Period and my conversation with Tiq Milan. I feel like he brings the word, and what I mean by that is the word that is love, the word that anchors our identity in God, in Theos, his theology, his philosophy, his joy, captivating. What are you going to do about your identity? I hope you find it in love.