

Erin's Graduation Ring

By ET Sterling

Your Graduation Ring was handmade for you out of 14 gauge Sterling Silver. To make this ring, the silver was hammered, annealed, and quenched several times to achieve the desired effect. Here's why:

Hammering hardens the metal. But, in order to soften it so that the hammering will continue to have effect, it must be annealed and quenched. Annealing is a process of heating the metal to a dull, red glow and then quenching (dipping) it in water. Quenching is the process of transferring the heat of the fire from the metal to the water.

The process of annealing is similar to the process of refining. In annealing you only heat the silver to a dull, red, glow. In refining, the silver is heated to the melting point. At that time the impurities separate from the silver and rise to the top. The impurities are then removed from the silver and the result is that the silver becomes more pure. But, like a Christian born into a new life in Christ, this silver was already refined before this bracelet's journey began.

In the Bible, the refining of silver is used as a metaphor for being tested in this life and as a result becoming more like God. I think of the process of annealing as similar to the process of going through hardship. When we face hard times, we have a choice of letting our hearts become hard to God or to become soft to God. I think of becoming soft to God as opening our hearts to the wisdom and comfort of our Lord, open to being molded and shaped by the hands of God.

Amos 5:6 Seek the LORD and live, or he will sweep through the house of Joseph like a fire; it will devour, and Bethel will have no one to **quench** it. (NIV)

Ps 66:8-20 Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. **For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.** You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance. I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you--vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams

I will offer bulls and goats. Selah Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me! (NIV)

Isa 48:10 See, I have **refined** you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. (NIV)

Zech 13:9 This third I will bring into the fire; **I will refine them like silver** and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'" (NIV)

I hammered the silver until I got the desired effect, annealing and hammering several times. Upon completion the ring is now 10mm wide. At this time I stamped the lettering. Then to blacken the lettering I applied Liver of Sulfer to oxidize the silver. I then did a rough polish to remove the excess oxidation. I shaped the ring and gave it a final polish. I then cleaned it and used silver polish.

Your ring was designed and created for you. Your sister, Kelly, ordered this ring for you as a memento of your graduation. The word "**VISION**" is stamped on it. She said that you are passionate

about using your music for God and His work. She said that the word “**VISION**” expresses your ‘directed passion’ for God. I did some Bible study and feel like the following verses express this vision.

Ps 92:1-5 It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands. How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts! (NIV)

On the inside of your ring your sister asked that I imprint the verse reference, **Jeremiah 29:11**, which is as follows:

Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (NIV)

And then, of course, this ring was created to commemorate the culmination of your hard work, your **Graduation** in the year of our Lord, **2004**.

Your sister ordered the ring with the hammered finish. I love making jewelry this way. To me this is more an expression of a vision for how a piece should look. The metal shows the marks of the hammer. Also, if you look into the marking you may notice that there are darker, purplish spots. These are the effects of applying the flame to the metal. It's called firescale. Leaving some evidence of the firescale gives the hammering depth and, I think contributes to the overall effect of the piece. It makes me think of ourselves, our human bodies will show the scars of our life on earth, but by the blood of Christ, we are pure and made perfect in God's eyes.

A couple more silver quotes from the Bible:

Ps 12:6-7 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O LORD, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.

Prov 25:11 A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. (NIV)

So, your special creation contains an allegory for your life as a Christian: Starting as a pure creation, we are hammered – but through annealing and quenching, we are made stronger and more beautiful. In this process, we are shaped and polished to achieve the desired effect. And, while we may show the scarring and pock marks of a difficult life, we achieve the special character and depth intended for us by God.

About my jewelry and how to care for it:

Your ET Sterling Silver jewelry is entirely hand-made by me, Elaine Tietz. I design each custom piece to fit your unique personality and style. I craft each piece out of Sterling silver. This is also called “925” or 92.5% pure silver. I craft each piece individually. I cut and shape each piece by feel and by sight. I do not use forms or patterns. Therefore, each piece is different.

Your ET Sterling jewelry will not be perfectly symmetrical and will have slight variations. The lettering will not be perfectly even. As an artist, I consider this to be desirable, distinguishing my work from ordinary, machine made jewelry.

Your hand-made Silver Jewelry is made to be worn all the time. It is made to withstand everyday wear and tear. If it should break under any circumstance I will be glad to repair at no charge (as long as I am able). Silver jewelry that is worn all the time does not tarnish as quickly because the oils in your skin keep it from doing so. It will also develop a "worn patina" as it taps against itself or other jewelry. This is desirable and should be considered part of the charm of a much worn, favorite piece of jewelry.

All ET Sterling jewelry comes packaged with a piece of 3M anti-tarnish paper (gray paper square). If you store your silver jewelry in the zip-lock bag, this should keep it from tarnishing as quickly, however it is only supposed to last about 6 months. The yellow cloth is Sunshine cloth. It is great for a quick polish. Just rub. Don't rub oxidized (blackened) areas too much because it will rub out

For a good polishing, use a good silver polish like 3M Silver Polish with Tarnishguard. Follow the directions and use an old toothbrush when you rinse to get the polish out of letters or other small places.

Watch out for Chlorine bleaches. It will make spots on Silver. This has happened to me while cleaning and pouring Clorox into the washer. You can get it off, but it might take a couple of polishes. Also watch out for sulfur based products. I used a facial mask with sulfur in it. It turned my earrings black. I had to use my polishing equipment to get it off. I would be glad to polish yours if you have one of these problems.

If you come to visit me, I will polish your jewelry. Or you can mail it to me. Remember if you have any problems or repairs that I will do so at no charge.

Elaine Tietz

www.ETSterling.com

ETSterling@yahoo.com