

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHRIS GETTLEFINGER

by Ken Green, Searching the Scriptures, February 1979

Actually, I don't know if Gettlefinger is a good man or not, but there are some good things about him that we could all emulate. It may be that some of our foreign readers do not know who Chris Gettlefinger is. We'll ask the vast majority of our readers to patiently bear with us as we explain that he plays basketball (though not often) for the University of Kentucky.

Confession is good for the soul, therefore I shall now acknowledge that I, not being an ardent basketball fan, didn't know who he was either. But Owensboro sports writer, Mike Smith, called the 6 foot, 2 inch sophomore to my attention in a January 10, 1979, editorial. I found some of his comments thought provoking and applicable to our Christian vocation.

Smith compared our hero to an old high school buddy by the name of Sam Carcova. Sam, like Gettlefinger, was on the basketball team, but he seldom got to play. One year, he went the entire season without scoring a single point. But in warmups, he was terrific. He always made his lay-ups, right handed and left, just like the rest. His friends in the stands took notice, and decided that Sam needed some appreciation.

"On the final night of the season, when Sam banked in his first shot in our warm-up drill, the gym exploded with a roar usually reserved for last-second heroics. Soon the cheers became a chant, 'Sam, Sam, Sam.' And there was a sign, 'Congratulations, Sam —1,000 career warm-up points.' "Those kids were saying thanks to Sam for hanging in there, going to practice everyday, and working just as hard and caring just as much about what happened to the team as the starters."

Chris Gettlefinger fits the same mold. He didn't get a berth on the U. K. squad by being scouted, wooed, charmed, and promised everything. He just showed up for practice last year and made the team. In games, you know where to find him. He's seated on the U. K. bench. But he's not sour about that. He says: "I realize they're four players ahead of me at my position. If I can't beat them out, I have to find another way to help the team. So I work on preparing our guards to face certain opponents by acting out those opponent's moves in practice. If it's done any good, I'm glad." In other words, he's happy to be number 5, so long as he's making a contribution, and doing his best.

Considering how often the apostle, Paul, referred to the athletic contests of his day,

I don't believe he would frown on using the Sam Carcova's and Chris Gettlefinger's to illustrate something else he said: "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness" (1 Cor. 12:22, 23).

Let us thank God for those in the church who have but one or two talents, but use them rather than bury them. A word of appreciation to them wouldn't hurt either. Something like: "Thanks for hanging in there!"