

The Power of Forgiveness

John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson were embroiled together in the Watergate scandal that ultimately led to President Richard Nixon's humiliating resignation.

Ehrlichman was counsel and assistant to the president for domestic affairs under Nixon. He was an important influence on Nixon's domestic policy. He was convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury and served a year and a half in prison. Colson, director of the office of public liaison, was once known as Nixon's "hatchet man." He pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and served seven months in prison.



Colson became a Christian through this experience, but Ehrlichman, a Christian Scientist, seethed in anger. For more than 20 years, he openly despised Colson and wrote defamatory articles against him.

Less than a year before Ehrlichman's death in 1999, Colson learned of his antagonist's failing health. The former domestic affairs advisor, whose office was once immediately above the Oval Office, was now alone in a nursing home. He was dying of renal failure, his third wife had left him, and he was alienated from his children.

Into this setting, Colson came and not only shared the love of Christ, but also demonstrated it as well. Ehrlichman was amazed at the forgiveness and concern offered him by a man he had so vehemently attacked.

That one-hour meeting led to Ehrlichman's journey toward God. Three months later, he called Colson and told him the doctors said he wouldn't live much longer.

Colson was sick at the time, so he sent a good friend who led Ehrlichman to Christ.

Ehrlichman died shortly thereafter and entered into the presence of God because one Christian decided to extend Christ-like forgiveness.

Genuine forgiveness is incredibly powerful.

The lesson for us? Is there someone in your life – or mine – who needs to be forgiven?

The results, for both parties, can be amazing.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter