 The Examen

Trevor Hudson on the Examen:  
<http://youtu.be/dL6Xae1sycs>

Excerpt from Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton:

This is a practice that incorporates all of the elements of self-examination that we have explored in this chapter: examen of consciousness, examen of conscience and confession. While the steps may seem a bit ponderous as laid out here, once you become accustomed to them, they become less linear and you can give yourself to the underlying rhythm and flow. You will want to explore when and how often to engage this discipline. Some people prefer to do a daily examen, while others prefer to do it weekly.

Preparation. Spend a few moments in silence, allowing yourself to be still and know how much God loves you. Use a favorite Scripture, prayer or other spiritual reading as needed in order to settle into the assurance of God’s love in the present moment. Hear God say to you, “I have loved you with an everlasting love . . .”

Invitation. Invite God to go with you in your search for evidence of his presence throughout your day and in your search for self-knowledge.

Review the day. Identify the major events of the day (or the week, if you are doing the examen weekly), including your spiritual practices, meals, appointments, interactions with others, significant events at work. Reflect on each of the events, noticing where God seemed to be loving you, speaking to you, guiding you or showing you something new about himself.

Give thanks. Thank God for each part of your day, for his presence with you in the midst of it, for those moments when you sensed a growing freedom from sin and a greater capacity to love God and others. If there are any unresolved issues or questions pertaining to the events of the day, express these to God as well, and allow yourself to experience gratitude for God’s presence with you even in places that feel dark or confusing.

Confess. Using Psalm 139:23-24 as your prayer, invite God to bring to mind attitudes, actions or moments when you fell short of exhibiting the character of Christ or the fruit of the Spirit. As God brings different areas to mind, reflect on what contributed to the situation and what might enable you to respond differently in the future.

Ask forgiveness. Also express your willingness to take any concrete steps needed to allow Christ’s character to be more fully formed in you. Be assured of God’s forgiveness (I John 1:9) and his power to continue leading you into the transformation you desire. Ask God if there is anything you need to do to make things right relative to the situation you have confessed.

Seek out spiritual friendship. Seek out a spiritual friend and tell them what you are discovering about yourself, your confession and your resolve to pursue transformation in this area.

Other helpful links:

Lancaster Bible College  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G40noy9bsIk>

Ignatian Spirituality Loyola Press  
<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen>