

# Takeaways from Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, 2nd ed (Thomas Schreiner)

- An article from <http://www.giffmex.org/ideas/takeaways-2017-2018/>. Takeaways are neither book reviews nor exhaustive summaries. They are merely summaries of insights I found helpful in the books, organized by topic.
- **New Testament**
  - **Historical background of the NT**
    - Schreiner has a helpful **annotated bibliography of introductory sources** on the historical background of the New Testament. - *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) 53, 56-59.*
  - **Paul's theology**
    - Schreiner has an **annotated bibliography of works on Pauline theology (146-150)**. *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011)*
  - **Paul's letters**
    - While Paul's epistles respond to specific situations, **they are epistles, and not just letters**, because they are more literary than typical letters, and were meant to be read in worship, obeyed, and shared between churches. - *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 12-13.*
      - "the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord." (1 Cor 14.37)
      - "I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers." (1 Thess 5.27)
      - "If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess 3.14)
      - "And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea." (Col 4.16)
    - Schreiner has a list of **elements found in Pauline letter closings**, with verses, on 17-18. - *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) 17-18.*
  - **1 Thessalonians, situation**
    - Schreiner claims, contrary to what I was taught, that **Paul's defenses of his ministry in 1 Thessalonians** were written to support the gospel, not to respond to critics or be defensive. There are no opponents mentioned, and in general Paul seems content with how things are going in the church. - *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) 33, n. 46.*

- **Interpretation**

- **Grammatical analysis**

- Schreiner has a very helpful chapter on **sentence diagramming** (70-93). - *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).*

- **Syntactical analysis**

- Schreiner lists the possible **relationships between clauses** (coordinate and subordinate), and gives examples. (100-110) *Thomas R. Schreiner, Interpreting the Pauline Epistles. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).*

- **Epistle-specific analysis**

- Schreiner lists three reasons that **limit the direct life application of texts** from Paul's epistles:
      - The occasional nature of the epistles (written for specific situations in specific churches, not as comprehensive essays on ethics)
      - The need to compare texts with Paul's entire corpus of letters
      - Cultural differences between Paul's time and ours.
        - (Me: note that Paul himself changed cultural applications when ministering among different people, 1 Cor 9.20-22)