

# 2 Timothy 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

## Analysis

**But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.** Returning to the theme of v. 14, Paul warns against certain controversies. "Foolish and unlearned questions" (tas de mōras kai apaideut ous zētēseis, τὰς δὲ μωρὰς καὶ ἀπαιδεύτους ζητήσεις). Mōros (μωρός) means foolish, stupid, senseless—not merely unintelligent but lacking spiritual wisdom. Apaideu tos (ἀπαίδευτος) means untrained, ignorant, lacking education—speculations showing intellectual and spiritual immaturity. Zētēsis (ζήτησις) means investigation, controversial question, dispute.

The command: "avoid" (paraitou, παραιτοῦ)—refuse, reject, decline. Don't engage these debates. Some questions seem intellectually stimulating but are spiritually barren. They waste time, energy, and goodwill on matters that don't advance godliness or gospel truth. The reason for avoiding them: "knowing that they do gender strifes" (eidōs hoti gennōsin machas, εἰδὼς ὅτι γεννῶσιν μάχας). The verb gennaō (γεννάω) means give birth to, produce, generate. Machē (μάχη) means battle, conflict, strife. Foolish questions inevitably breed quarrels, not understanding.

This requires wisdom to distinguish genuine theological inquiry from fruitless speculation. Not every question deserves extended debate. Some queries are designed to confuse rather than clarify, to showcase cleverness rather than pursue truth, to win arguments rather than build up the body. Discerning leaders recognize and avoid such traps.

## Historical Context

---

First-century Greek culture loved sophistry—clever arguments for their own sake. Itinerant philosophers earned living through public debates showcasing rhetorical skill. Some converts brought this love of controversy into churches. Jewish converts sometimes raised questions about endless genealogies, obscure Levitical regulations, and rabbinic minutiae. Both groups generated much heat but little light. Such debates divided congregations, consumed leadership energy, and confused new believers. Paul's counsel wasn't anti-intellectual but prudent—invest energy in questions that matter, avoid those that only produce conflict.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

---

1. What theological controversies or speculative questions are you engaging in that generate more conflict than clarity, more division than discipleship?
2. How can you develop wisdom to distinguish important doctrinal discussions from foolish speculations that waste time and damage unity?
3. In what areas might you be pursuing intellectual novelty or rhetorical victory rather than genuine understanding that produces godliness?

## Interlinear Text

---

τὰς	δὲ	μωρὰς	καὶ	ἀπαιδεύτους	ζητήσεις	παραιτοῦ
G3588	<b>But</b>	<b>foolish</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>unlearned</b>	<b>questions</b>	<b>avoid</b>
G1161	G3474	G2532	G521	G2214	G3868	
εἰδὼς	ὅτι	γεννῶσιν	μάχας·			
<b>knowing</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>they do gender</b>	<b>strifes</b>			
G1492	G3754	G1080	G3163			

## Additional Cross-References

---

**2 Timothy 2:14** (Parallel theme): Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

**Titus 3:9** (Parallel theme): But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

**1 Timothy 1:4** (Parallel theme): Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

**1 Timothy 4:7** (Parallel theme): But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

**2 Timothy 2:16** (Parallel theme): But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.