

The Law of Non-Contradiction

We are all familiar with certain Laws of Physics such as the Law of Gravity, or the Laws of Thermodynamics. These laws have been proven to be true and constant through mathematics. And because they are true and constant, we can use them with confidence as we develop and create things like bridges and airplanes in the physical world.

But did you know that logic and reason also have laws? And just like the laws of physics, the Laws of Logic are TRUE and CONSTANT!

One of the laws of logic, or laws of philosophy, is called The Law of Non-Contradiction (sometimes called The Law of Contradiction).

The Law of Non-Contradiction states - contradictory propositions cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time.

For example - Consider this image:



One proposition could be: The outside of this cup is red.

And the contrary proposition would be: The outside of this cup is NOT red.

The two propositions are referring to the same cup (they are in the same sense), but they are contrary. So, applying the Law of Non-Contradiction, we would know with certainty that both of those propositions are not true. One or both must be false.

Another way to state this is:

Two contrary statements about the same topic CAN NOT both be true at the same time. One, or both, of the statements MUST be false.

The same principle, or law, can even be applied when there are more than two propositions about the same topic.

Using the same image above, consider these propositions

1. The outside of the cup is Blue
2. The outside of the cup is Green
3. The outside of the cup is Yellow

All of these propositions are FALSE!

Now, how do we apply this Law of Non-Contradiction?

Our society and our culture are filled with contrary ideas and opinions about specific topics; each one claiming to be right. Our news media... our politics... all claim that their opinions are right.

But it doesn't take long to see that there are contradictions in these opinions. How do we know which one is right; if any of them are...?

Rather than asking if these opinions are right, a better question to ask about these opinions is:

“Is it TRUE?”

We know, because of the Law of Non-Contradiction, that these opinions can NOT all be TRUE at the same time. TRUTH by definition is exclusive; it excludes everything but itself. (For more on this statement, see our study topic entitled “Absolute TRUTH”)

Today, more than ever, we are overwhelmed with opinions!

So, from what basis do we begin to discern TRUTH?

Jesus, as He was praying for us in John 17:17 says this – Sanctify them through Thy TRUTH, Thy Word is TRUTH.

God's Word is TRUE!! And knowing it and studying it allows us to filter through all the FALSE opinions of our society and our culture. God's Word is the basis, or the foundation, that we must begin with to be able to discern TRUTH! (For more on this statement, see our study topic entitled “Presuppositions”)

In the end, it is not our opinions that matter. What matters is... the TRUTH!!