



## WOW: Word Of the Week

**On-Deck [On Deck, OnDeck]**  
**August 7, 2024**

Another WOW! On-Deck. Before you reprimand me, I checked. My grammar-spellcheck accepted the hyphenated word, the two word phrase, and the word with no space if I capitalized the O and the D!

All hands on-deck. Available, ready for action. The original reference was to crew members being on the deck of a ship, ready to perform their duties. The call often meant an emergency, a special need, all available personnel were needed! If you know baseball, you thought of the next hitter waiting to bat. (Without the hyphen, the prepositional phrase merely shows location, “they lounged on deck all afternoon.”) In our world, the word is used in many different contexts to call people to action. I think of Kansas wheat harvests.

Most Christians have heard the passage cited.

*When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to His disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields.” (Matthew 9:35-38)*

Jesus issued a call to his disciples. Too few workers. Too much harvest, too many fields. What is the need? Everyone on-deck. Harvest workers. Ready for action. Ready to help with the task at hand. An urgent need.

In Kansas, we kids could drive at age 14 if we were on farm errands. When the wheat harvest was ready, we drove combines, wheat trucks to the elevator, to go get parts, whatever was needed. Younger children helped bring meals and water to the field. When the sun dries the morning dew, harvest will be “everyone ‘on-deck’” until the dew falls that night. The cafe stayed open late during harvest.

Application. The church is losing the battle to bring the multitudes of our world to Jesus. Few churches can claim to have all hands on-deck. Not only are many Christians not on-deck, many are not even on-board. They are enjoying shore excursions, shore leave.

We live in a world of confusion and helplessness, surrounded by some of the least churched, least Christian generations in history. Brokenness, hopelessness, everywhere. Addiction, anger, depression, isolation, polarization, and emptiness abound. Sheep without a shepherd.

When the harvest is greatest, the church needs an “all hands on-deck” call. We have taken our eyes off the harvest fields. Those sent are too often not harvest workers. Our world is hungry for hope, the multitudes seek meaning. The harvest is greatest when the need is greatest. That is today!

On-deck. Among the lost, encountering them, seeing them, with eyes of compassion, sharing spiritual hope. The eternal Good News is not that Jesus helps with physical, emotional needs. The eternal Good News is eternal! The harvest requires all hands on-deck. From the youngest to the oldest.

On-deck, available, ready for action. An urgent need, all available personnel. Will you answer Jesus’s call? Are you on-deck? Will you pray for the harvest? For more harvest workers? What would happen if every Christian was on-deck in prayer? Only God knows!